CAMEO PLAYS No. 12

Editor : F. M. NAYLOR

EIGHT PLAYS
FROM
HISTORY & LEGEND

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Leeds
E. J. ARNOLD & SON LTD.
Glasgow Belfast
London

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PASSPORT TO ELYSIUM (489 B.C.)

PROLOGUE

The Ancient Greeks believed that their heroes, after many valiant deeds on earth, passed to the Elysian Fields, far to the west of the world, where they spent their time in endless enjoyment. There were sports and games, dancing and feasting. This region of the immortals was for ever bathed in a soft purple light, and had its own sun, moon and stars. Only the heroes were allowed to set foot in the Elysian Fields; all others passed on to the grey and dismal regions of Hades, governed by the god Pluto.

In 489 B.C., Greece was invaded by Darius, King of the Persians, with a mighty army. Had he conquered, not only would the Greek States have collapsed, but the happy regions of Elysium would have fallen into oblivion. But an Athenian army met the Persians at Marathon, and, though vastly outnumbered, completely defeated the enemy. One of the heroes of that day was the courier Phidippides. He had already run to Sparta and back in an attempt to obtain assistance. He took part in the battle, and when it was all over he went at full speed to give the news to the Athenians. The distance was twenty-two miles. On arriving there he gave his message, but was so exhausted by his exertions that he fell dead. But his soul, we imagine, continued the race to the pleasant fields of Elysium where the heroes anxiously awaited news of the outcome of the struggle.

CHARACTERS

THESEUS
CADMUS
JASON
ULYSSES
RHADAMANTHUS, Ruler of Elysium
LINUS, Athenian Soldiers
THERON
NESTOR
ACHILLES
AJAX
PHIDIPPIDES, the Courier

Each of the heroes wears a white fillet, or band, round th head. RHADAMANTHUS *is distinguished from the rest by a golde band.*

SCENE.—*A grove which overlooks the Elysian Plain. The seat on the stage are made to represent logs. The "throne" o* RHADAMANTHUS *stands a little higher than the rest, and i placed rather to the* R. *of the stage, so that he can face half-*L *and look over the plain. The seats may be arranged in such a manner as will facilitate the grouping of the characters on the stage.*

When the curtain rises, ORPHEUS *is sitting* R., *stringing a lute* OLD NESTOR *sits by him.*

NESTOR. Why do you put new strings to your lute Orpheus? Surely the others are good enough. [*He picks up a string.*] Look, this one is hardly touched yet.

ORPHEUS. I need new strings. To-morrow I shall sing a last dirge to Elysium.

NESTOR. A dirge? Nay, Orpheus, this is a land of plenty joy and merriment. We'll have no dirges here.

ORPHEUS. We shall not be here after to-morrow. You and I, Ajax, Achilles and all the heroes of Greece will be making our way wearily to the Land of the Shades, leaving Elysium to the conquerors. Conquerors! To think proud Hellas should be ravaged by those arrogant Persians with their beards stuck up with glue! And that mad king of theirs who struts across the world like a well-fed turkey-cock. Bah! [*He pulls at the string, and it breaks.*]

NESTOR. There, you've broken the new string. Better put the old one back. [ORPHEUS *picks up the old one again.*] Cadmus and Theseus will surely succeed in bringing the help of the gods. Don't lose heart, Orpheus.

ORPHEUS [*looking dolefully at the string he broke*]. A bad omen, Old One. Why didn't they send you and me to plead with Zeus? Cadmus and Theseus have too many enemies

among the gods. Besides, they're all brawn and no brain. Why, with your silver tongue and my lute, we could have moved all Olympus to tears. As it is—

NESTOR. They are our elders, Orpheus, and their words carry great weight, even with the Mighty Ones.

ORPHEUS. *Their* words! How many sensible words have either of them spoken since we first knew them? All that Cadmus can do is draw a bow and tell us again and again how he created Thebes. As for Theseus, I'm tired of watching him show his muscles and boast how he slew the Minotaur. I'm sorry I ever put the story into song. Nobody sings it now but Theseus himself. What a voice!

NESTOR. It's the best song you ever wrote.

ORPHEUS. It's a lot of rubbish. [*He lays his harp on one side and paces the stage.*] The Persians have landed on Greek soil. The last messenger told us they were at Marathon with only a few Greeks between them and Athens. You know what that means. Once Athens falls, Elysium falls and we move out—to Hades!

NESTOR. Well, what of it? From all I hear it's not a bad place, and Pluto's an easy-going sort of god.

ORPHEUS [*bitterly*]. That's all you know. Have you ever been there? I have—once, when I went to fetch Eurydice back to earth. It was a mean trick he played on me, just because one of us turned round. God or no god, if I meet him again, I'll fly at his throat.

NESTOR. Calm yourself, Orpheus. It's not so bad as all that. The battle isn't lost yet.

ORPHEUS. It will be. Oh, the sun, the moon, the green fields and the purple light of Elysium! However shall I live without you? Why can't I turn into an orchid or a honeysuckle?

NESTOR [*alarmed*]. Peace, Orpheus, you speak blasphemy.

[ORPHEUS *sits, head in hands.* NESTOR *pats him soothingly on the shoulder.*]

Come, come, you must have courage.

[*Enter* JASON *and* ULYSSES.]

JASON. Well, after all, Ulysses, I've never been too much in love with this place.

ULYSSES. Nor I, Jason. It's a poor place for sailors. I like grey skies and a good stiff headwind. I'd give anything for another trip between Scylla and Charybdis. Ah, those were the days!

JASON. Have you ever seen a storm in Elysium?

ULYSSES. Not one. Why, there isn't even a decent-sized wave. Just puff! puff! puff! and off we go across the lakes at a snail's pace. It's child's play. I've nearly forgotten how to furl a sail. Now if these Persians win—

ORPHEUS. The gods forbid!

ULYSSES. Why? I don't wish our people any harm, you know that. But this place is too quiet for me. As I was saying, if the Persians win, we go to Hades, don't we?

JASON. So I understand.

ULYSSES. Then I'll take a craft out on Lake Avernus, where there are a few good storms, or, better still, I'll apply for old Charon's job. He must be tired by now of that old ferry of his. A new ferryman like me would make a few very necessary improvements.

JASON. What will you do, Orpheus?

ORPHEUS. I'll throw my lute into the Styx.

ULYSSES. Good. I'll dive into the whirlpool and fetch it out for you. That at least would be a bit of excitement.

ORPHEUS. You fools! You don't know what you're talking about. No sun, no moon—just grey shades, horrible monsters and boiling cataracts.

ULYSSES. Well, we've seen a good few of those in our time, eh, Jason ?

JASON. I should say. Oh, cheer up, boy. You'll get a good job down there. You've got talent. Look, there are two who don't seem concerned about it all. [*He points off stage* L.] Go on, Achilles ! Run !

ULYSSES. He's done it ! No ! Up, Ajax !

JASON. Achilles !

ULYSSES. Ajax ! Ajax !

[*They are all standing now, looking off stage.*]

JASON. Oh, Achilles, run !

ULYSSES. Ajax ! He's passing him. Ajax ! He's done it. Oh, bravo !

NESTOR. Achilles should stop running for good. He'll never do anything with that heel of his.

ULYSSES. I agree. But you know what he's like. The best ·ioteer, the best discus thrower. Now he wants to beat ·admus at archery and Ajax at running. If he doesn't do it he'll sulk a whole month. You mark my words.

NESTOR. Ah me, what a tragedy, to be spoilt by one's ·other. Poor lad, she dotes on him.

[*Enter* ACHILLES, *limping, with his arm round the shoulder of* AJAX.]

ACHILLES. At last I've beaten you. Now let me have those laurels.

AJAX. But I passed you before we reached the winning post.

ACHILLES. You didn't. I was a good head in front all the way. I kept my lead.

AJAX. Oh, Achilles !

ACHILLES. I did, I tell you. I've been in training for this race long enough, and now that I've won it, you're trying to keep the prize from me. I'll have the garland, do you hear ! I'm champion now !

AJAX. Oh, very well. But next time—[*They are going out.*]

ULYSSES. Wait a minute. [*They turn.*] Who's champion?

ACHILLES. I am.

ULYSSES. Oh no, you're not. **Ajax passed you short of the winning post.**

ACHILLES. He didn't. I swear he didn't.

AJAX. Well, I thought I did.

ULYSSES. We'll soon see. What do the others say? Come along, you all saw the finish of the race. Achilles or Ajax?

NESTOR. Ajax.

ORPHEUS. Ajax.

JASON. Ajax.

ULYSSES. And I say Ajax too. The garland remains with Ajax. We all dispute the claim of Achilles. Fair's fair, gentlemen!

ACHILLES. I deny it. I beat him all the way, and I'll have the garland.

ULYSSES. Oh, no, you won't, you have no witnesses. But if you like to run the whole course again, we'll all be there, and—

ACHILLES [*wincing*]. Oh, my heel! Why can't something be done about it? I'd be all round champion then.

NESTOR. Even the gods would find it difficult to cure one who's been dipped in the river Styx. Let me see it. H'm. You'll get no help from those arnica plasters, my boy. It's incurable. Even Aesculapius says so.

ACHILLES. A curse on Aesculapius and the gods who taught him!

NESTOR. Achilles! [*They are all shocked.*]

ACHILLES. A curse on them, I say. Oh, but for this, I'd be champion of Elysium, equal to the gods themselves

JASON. You idiot! That's why you've got a bad heel. I will be a curb on your vaulting ambitions. Now stop speakin blasphemy.

ACHILLES. I won't. I pronounce a solemn—

[*They pounce on him in time to stop the words.* ULYSSES *stop his mouth.* NESTOR *and* JASON *seize him by the arms. H struggles. Enter* RHADAMANTHUS *with* THESEUS *and* CADMUS. *The other heroes let* ACHILLES *go.*]

RHADAMANTHUS. What! Trouble in Elysium? How's this?

JASON. Can't you stop this young fool from cursing the gods?

ACHILLES. The gods are laming me out of spite.

NESTOR. Don't be childish, Achilles. Sit down.

RHADAMANTHUS. Oh, so that's the trouble. You blame the gods because you're not champion of everything. Do you realize, Achilles, that nobody may care to-morrow whether you're champion or not, least of all yourself?

ACHILLES. What?

RHADAMANTHUS. Sit down, all of you. I have news that will make you shudder. Elysium is in danger.

[*They sit down,* RHADAMANTHUS *on the higher seat.*]

Theseus and Cadmus have just returned from their mission to Olympus. Speak, Theseus.

THESEUS. As you all know, we were chosen by you to beg a favour of the gods, that we, the heroes of Greece, should be allowed to go back to our mother country to help to drive away the Persians who have landed on our shores. Even now the enemy is drawn up in strength before the plain of Marathon. The Greeks may lose the battle.

ACHILLES It will serve the Greeks right. The present generation is soft, flabby. Why, when I was at Troy—

NESTOR. This is not like the Trojan War. The Trojans fought like gentlemen, but this enemy is ten times as numerous and a hundred times more terrible. He wages what he calls "total war," war on undefended cities, war on women and children, the massacre of fleeing enemies, torture, starvation, and every refinement of horror.

RHADAMANTHUS. That is true. Go on, Theseus.

THESEUS. If the Persians win this battle, Greece and Elysium are lost to us. Why, even the Persian soldiers call themselves "Immortals." They strive to embrace death in victorious battle that they may enter these sacred groves of Elysium and drive us out to the Shades. All this I told the gods.

ORPHEUS. And what did they say?

THESEUS. First our Lady Athene pleaded the cause of our city. In words such as even Nestor would envy, she begged for mercy on luckless Athens. The heart of mighty Zeus was touched. Even the jealous Hera plucked his garment and implored him to nod his lordly brow. Then the gods gathered round, and Father Zeus asked them one by one what favours they could offer. Poseidon the sea-god at first promised to raise the waves and drown the Persian ships, but he could not, for Boreas, the wild north wind, is now blowing far away over the Scythian wastes. Then Zeus beseeched the humble Hours to stretch themselves to their utmost, but in vain, for even the gods cannot play with time as they will. Then said Father Zeus, "Is there no aid?" At last the moon, fair Artemis, threw herself before the face of Apollo, the sun, that the earth may be darkened. But Apollo, who has never been a friend of Athens, flung her away, and flew into such a rage that Zeus reproved him. In this wise the gods took counsel, and I am to tell you that nothing can be done. The sea must roll, the hours must fly past, and the heavenly bodies must run their courses. What is to be will be.

[THESEUS *bows his head before* RHADAMANTHUS.]

AJAX. But are we not to go back to Greece? May we not fight the Persians as we did the Trojans?

CADMUS. Our Father Zeus speaks, and this is his wisdom. We are the past which cannot return. Our deeds on earth are done, and Greece must find her present heroes, if any there be.

JASON. But what of the future?

CADMUS. You will soon know, for either Elysium will be strengthened by a new band of heroes, or it will pass into the hands of Darius and his "Immortals." Look out on the road. [*He points off stage* R.] There you will know your fate. The battle is being fought now. Perhaps it is over, and the souls of the dead will be coming this way before long. If the first you see is a Greek, pour out your thanks to Zeus for the salvation of your land and for its new generation of heroes. If he is a Persian, prepare yourselves for the awful journey to the Land of the Shades.

ULYSSES [*rising and going to the wings* R., *to look along the road*]. It is well. [*He sighs.*] By my heart, I'd rather be a Shade than sojourn here in the company of a thousand Glue-beards.

ACHILLES. My first spear for Darius when he comes this way.

RHADAMANTHUS. Waiting is tedious. Come, Orpheus, a song.

ORPHEUS. I have no heart. [*He picks up his lyre.*] What shall it be? "Farewell to Elysium"?

NESTOR. Have a heart, boy. Elysium's not lost yet.

ORPHEUS. Cadmus and Theseus brought no help from the gods. Let us see what the lute of Orpheus will do.

[*He sings, accompanying himself on the lute.*]

Father of Hellas!
High above Thy mantling clouds
Immortal gods assemble.
Unsheathe the sword of victory,
And all Thy foes shall tremble!

ALL [...]. Oh! Do you all feel like that about
[...]ng. The heroes of to-day are a little
ORPHEUS. [...]y'd be better company than you are.
We [...]chilles here is a little hasty. Besides,
T[...]self for all we know. Are you?
P[...]
[...]ness! How am I to know? It was all
ALL [*singi*[...] I remember is that I killed a few, saved
[...] was off like a hare with the news, all the
[...]at a reception I got there! Yes, come to
ORPHEUS. [...] a busy day. May I sit down?

RHADAMANTHUS. By all means.

[*They sit and recline about stage.* ULYSSES *still stands watching* R.]

Now, young friend, I'll ask you to probe a little deeper into that memory of yours. How many did you slay?

PHIDIPPIDES. Oh, five or six, I don't know.

ACHILLES. Five or six! Ha! Ha!

RHADAMANTHUS. And you saved?

PHIDIPPIDES. About the same—five or six.

RHADAMANTHUS. And then you ran all the way to Athens.

PHIDIPPIDES. Yes, but before the battle I'd already taken a message to Sparta which is more than twice as far away from Marathon as Athens is. I did over a hundred miles, swimming rivers, scaling mountains and crossing trackless wastes. [*He suddenly becomes suspicious.*] Look here, is this a cross-examination or something?

NESTOR. We must, before admitting you, establish your claim to be a hero.

ACHILLES. Precisely. But we'd like you to know beforehand that we despise the whole modern breed and would shun your company if we could.

NESTOR. Speak for yourself, Achilles.

PHIDIPPIDES. So if I'm not a hero [illegible] *ring up* dainty standards I'm to be thrown out [illegible] *at'* the case I'm going. I'd rather have [illegible] myself in here by boasting. Good-by[e] *round at the seated and reclining figures.* [illegible] now. I—I feel *turns to go out.*] [illegible] breath when I

ULYSSES [*stopping him*]. Not so fast [illegible] uld run another hot-headed as Achilles. Go back for a whi[le] *a" over, then* We've all had to pass the test, you kno[w] funny! other.

PHIDIPPIDES. I'm having no test. Let [illegible]thon, and we

ULYSSES. Sit down, boy. [PHIDIPPIDES *tries to* [illegible] *way out.*] Oh, no, you don't. [ULYSSES *puts his arm* [illegible] *the exit.* PHIDIPPIDES *is no match for his strength.*] You've [illegible] much right to be in Elysium as anybody else. Go along, now.

PHIDIPPIDES [*returning gloomily*]. Well, if that's the case I'll stay. But I won't have our heroes of to-day insulted, not even by Achilles.

RHADAMANTHUS. Your wishes are ours. Achilles will hold his tongue in future. [ACHILLES *turns sulkily away.*]

[*Snatches of song are heard outside. It is a soldiers' marching song, coming nearer and nearer.* PHIDIPPIDES *is delighted to hear it.*]

VOICE [*off*]. When first I joined the in-fan-tree;

CHORUS [*off*]. *Oh, fie, what a terrible war!*

VOICE. [*off*]. I thought it was just the job for me.

CHORUS. [*off*]. *Don't let it get you down.*

[*The heroes are amused.*]

VOICE [*off*]. But the sergeant said I was far too dense,
I had no "savvy" and I had no sense,
So they docked my pay by eighteenpence.

CHORUS [*off*]. *Don't let it get you down.*

[*A ripple of laughter goes round stage.*]

PHIDIPPIDES [re… …l]. Oh! Do you all feel like that about me? If so, I'll b… …ng. The heroes of to-day are a little more polite. I think … …y'd be better company than you are.

NESTOR. No, wait. A… …chilles here is a little hasty. Besides, you may be a hero you… …self for all we know. Are you?

PHIDIPPIDES. Good… …iness! How am I to know? It was all over so quickly. All I remember is that I killed a few, saved a few, and then I … was off like a hare with the news, all the way to Athens. Wh… …at a reception I got there! Yes, come to think of it, I've had … a busy day. May I sit down?

RHADAMANTHUS. By all means.

They sit and recline about stage. ULYSSES *still stands watching* R.]

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NESTOR. Speak for yourself, Achilles.

PHIDIPPIDES. So if I'm not a hero according to Achilles' dainty standards I'm to be thrown out, eh ? Well, if that's the case I'm going. I'd rather have the Shades than work myself in here by boasting. Good-bye, my heroes. [*He looks round at the seated and reclining figures.*] Take it easy. [*He turns to go out.*]

ULYSSES [*stopping him*]. Not so fast, my lad. You're as hot-headed as Achilles. Go back for a while and think it over. We've all had to pass the test, you know, at some time or other.

PHIDIPPIDES. I'm having no test. Let me out !

ULYSSES. Sit down, boy. [PHIDIPPIDES *tries to force his way out.*] Oh, no, you don't. [ULYSSES *puts his arm across the exit.* PHIDIPPIDES *is no match for his strength.*] You've as much right to be in Elysium as anybody else. Go along, now.

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CHORUS [*off*]. *Oh, fie, what a terrible war !*

VOICE. [*off*]. I thought it was just the job for me.

CHORUS. [*off*]. *Don't let it get you down.*

[*The heroes are amused.*]

VOICE [*off*]. But the sergeant said I was far too dense,
I had no "savvy" and I had no sense,
So they docked my pay by eighteenpence.

CHORUS [*off*]. *Don't let it get you down.*

[*A ripple of laughter goes round stage.*]

PHIDIPPIDES [*in excitement*]. The boys—the boys are here!

[*The song ceases. The vocalists, off stage, have now seen* ULYSSES *and the heroes. They shout from the roadway.*]

VOICE [*off*]. What ho! boys!

ULYSSES. What ho!

VOICE [*off*]. This the way to Hades, chum?

ACHILLES. Right along. First on the left.

VOICE [*off*]. Right you are. Mighty nice place you've got there.

ULYSSES. Oh yes, fine place. Coming in for a minute?

ACHILLES. Ulysses!

VOICE [*off*]. Well, don't mind if we do. Got any nectar?

ULYSSES. Skins and skins of it.

VOICE [*off*]. That's done it. Let's go in, Linus.

ULYSSES. This way.

[*Enter* LINUS *and* THERON. *They see* PHIDIPPIDES *and he sees them.*]

LINUS. Why, Phidippides! You here!

PHIDIPPIDES. Linus! Theron! Oh, boys, I thought I'd lost you for ever!

[*They embrace, shake each other by the hand and show signs of great glee.*]

THERON. Wasn't that a lovely scrap? I wouldn't have missed it for worlds. See that glue-boy I got? He just asked for it, he did.

PHIDIPPIDES. He asked for it, but you got it, both of you.

LINUS. What do you mean?

PHIDIPPIDES. Do you know where you are?

LINUS. We haven't the slightest idea.

PHIDIPPIDES. Elysium, boy, Elysium! Look at those groves, look at these fields and that pavilion.

[*The two soldiers look out* L. *in amazement.*]

THERON. Go on! And are these the fellows we used to learn about at school?

[*The heroes are highly amused. Some of them nod as he looks round.*]

PHIDIPPIDES. Of course. [*He points them out.*] Theseus, Cadmus, Jason, Orpheus, Ulysses, Nestor—you'll know him by his beard—Achilles, Ajax and Rhadamanthus.

THERON. The heroes! I ought to know that one. [*Points to Ulysses.*] I've had many a lick from my teacher on his account. I never could get all those journeys right. [ULYSSES *laughs.*] Why did you make so many?

ULYSSES. I had to.

LINUS. I say, Theron, this isn't the place we want. These are heroes. We're only a couple of old sweats. Let's get along to the Shades.

THERON. Right. I'd like to be first on that ferry. I never could abide crowds.

PHIDIPPIDES [*eagerly*]. I'm coming with you.

[*They are on their way out* R.]

RHADAMANTHUS. Stop!

[ULYSSES *holds out his hand and motions them back.*]

I can see you are heroes. We'll talk about your deeds later. Will you stay with us?

THERON [*his eyes lighting up*]. Stay here, with this purple sky and these green fields? Who'd go to the Shades after being invited in here? I'll stay.

LINUS. So will I. What about it, Phidippides?

PHIDIPPIDES. Where you go, I go.

LINUS. That settles it.

ORPHEUS. Good for all of you. I like that song of yours. Tum te-te tum tum tum. Where did you learn it?

LINUS. Oh, it's an old army song. We make the words up as we go along. We've got lots more if you'd like to hear them.

ORPHEUS. Very well, let's have it.

LINUS [*singing*]. When first I joined the in-fan-tree;

ALL. *Oh, fie, what a terrible war!*

LINUS. I thought it was just the job for me.

ALL. *Don't let it get you down.*

LINUS. But the sergeant said I was far too dense,
I had no "savvy" and I had no sense,
So they docked my pay by eighteenpence.

ALL. *Don't let it get you down.*

LINUS. Your turn, Theron.

THERON. Right. How do you like this? [*sings.*]
The Persian lad has eyes of black,

ALL. *Oh, fie, what a terrible war!*

THERON. And a jugful of arrows across his back—

ALL. *Don't let it get you down.*

THERON. But don't be afraid of his tawny hue,
And don't be afraid of his ugly view,
There's nothing new in a beard of glue.

ALL. *Don't let it get you down.*
Don't let it get you down.
Don't let it get you down.
There's nothing new in a beard of glue,
Don't let it get you down.

[*The heroes break out into peal upon peal of Elysian laughter as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

THE FASCES (394 B.C.)

PROLOGUE

During the early days of the republic, the Roman State was engaged in almost continuous warfare with enemies from the neighbouring townships. By their victories, the Romans preserved their city and expanded its territories, conquering one enemy after another. During those days Rome had many heroes, of whom MARCUS FURIUS CAMILLUS *was one. As Dictator, he captured the neighbouring town of Veii by constructing a tunnel through which the Roman soldiers poured into the heart of the city. He was afterwards made Military Tribune, and was sent with an army to take Falerii. In 394 B.C. the siege of the city took place, and it is about this siege, described in the fifth book of the Roman historian Livy, that this play is written. Camillus was later exiled through the intrigues of his enemies, but when Rome itself was attacked by the Gauls in 390 B.C., he was recalled from exile and saved the city.*

CHARACTERS

MARCUS FURIUS CAMILLUS, Roman Military Tribune

LUCIUS, STOLO — Officers of Engineers in the Roman Army

THE SCHOOLMASTER

PHILO, COSSUS, PENNUS, ROSCIUS, SOTIMUS — Boys of Falerii

FABIUS COSSUS, JUNIUS SOTIMUS — Ambassadors from Falerii, fathers of two of the boys

A SOLDIER

A SLAVE

SCENE.—*Inside the tent of* CAMILLUS, *close by the walls of the besieged town of Falerii. Exits* R.U. *and* L.U. *A table on which is a large chart, upstage* C. *Pinned up on the sides of the tent are diagrams and sketches of siege engines.*

The SLAVE *is working behind the table, measuring out distances with calipers on the chart, and making marks. He whistles softly to himself.*

Enter LUCIUS *and* STOLO, *the two Officers of Engineers. The* SLAVE *stops whistling, looks up, then advances to them and bows low.*

SLAVE. I am to tell you that the Tribune expects you to wait for him.

STOLO. Oh ! Where is he ?

SLAVE. Making a tour of the siege works, sir.

STOLO. Is he ? Strange ! He might have told us about it, then we could have gone along with him.

SLAVE. I don't think it crossed his mind, sir. He does things very suddenly these days. I believe he's a little worried. Are you the new Engineer Officers ?

STOLO. We are.

SLAVE. He won't be long. He's been gone a good while now.

The SLAVE *goes back to his table.* LUCIUS *and* STOLO *move leisurely round the sides of the tent, looking at the drawings and sketches. The* SLAVE *begins to whistle, then, realizing that he is in the presence of superiors, stops, and gets on with his work.*]

LUCIUS. Stolo !

[STOLO *goes across stage to* LUCIUS' *side.* LUCIUS *points at a diagram.*]

My idea. I submitted it two months ago. Quick work, eh ? [*To the* SLAVE.] Is this in production yet ?

SLAVE. Oh, yes, sir, we have four of them round the walls.

LUCIUS. Good. [*He notices something queer about the diagram.*] Come here.

[*The* SLAVE *joins them.*]

LUCIUS. Who drew this ?

SLAVE. I did, sir.

LUCIUS. There's an extra platform here. Is that your idea ?

SLAVE. Yes, sir. It gives a little more height, and by stretching the base, so, you get the necessary stability.

LUCIUS. Quite, quite.

STOLO. You're a very clever chap.

SLAVE. Oh, no, sir. Just an inventor in a small way. [*He bows.*]

STOLO [*pointing to the table*]. What's that you've got ?

[*They move over. The* SLAVE *points out the features of his drawing.*]

SLAVE. This is an up-to-date plan of the town and its defences, sir. Here are the walls, here the gates. The Long Rampart runs here from north to south, and here are the positions of the chief engines of assault. Your four towers, sir, are here. [*He points out the places.*] You see the weak spots in the defence ?

LUCIUS. Yes. What are these two dark-coloured blobs ?

SLAVE. Special engines, sir. The Tribune will probably tell you.

LUCIUS. I see. On the secret list, eh ? [*He scrutinises the* SLAVE.] You're not a Roman, are you ?

SLAVE. No, sir. I'm from Veii. I was a draughtsman in the Fortifications Department before you captured the town. I'm a slave now.

STOLO. An enemy alien. Tt-tt ! Poor fellow. I'm sorry for you.

SLAVE. There's no need to be, sir. A clever slave is far better off than many a free man. My wife and children are in the Tribune's household, and I'm happy enough here. Many of my neighbours were killed, though.

LUCIUS. A pity. But war's war. You can't make child's play out of it, however you try. Come, let's see more of the map. We're new to this job. You can help us to get the lay-out until the chief comes back.

SLAVE. Very well, sir. Now the most powerful engines are here, on each side of the Long Rampart. They've got to be brought up for action, of course.

LUCIUS. Naturally. But how is he going to assault the town?

SLAVE. That's what's worrying him, sir. The leaders have all met him, and now he hopes you'll be able to help.

[*Enter* CAMILLUS. *The two* OFFICERS *come from behind the table and stand at attention.* CAMILLUS *approaches them.*]

CAMILLUS. You're the new Engineer Officers. They were a long time sending you. I need you badly. [*He holds out his hand to* STOLO.] Lucius?

STOLO. Stolo, sir. [*They shake hands, Roman fashion.*]

CAMILLUS. And Lucius. [*They shake hands.*] I am glad to have you here at last. I warn you, we are in for a hard time. Falerii is a tough proposition.

STOLO. Worse than Veii, sir.

CAMILLUS. Much worse. The walls are strong and the people are brave. At first I thought to frighten them into surrender. I've brought every siege weapon imaginable up to the walls. Look at all these drawings. But did I frighten them? Not a bit of it. They look out from their battlements like a lot of cheeky little boys. Why, even the children themselves come out and play games in No Man's land just as if it were a public park. You're laughing, but it's true.

LUCIUS. What about a tunnel, sir?

CAMILLUS. Worse than useless, worse than useless. You can't do the same thing twice. We surprised Veii by bringing up our tunnel into the very Temple of Juno, but it wouldn't work here. They'd spot it at once. No. I'm inclined to think

that the only way is a direct assault on the walls, and that would cost lives—too many for my good reputation. If it were to fail—even if it were to succeed, the cost would be so great that it would mean the end of Camillus.

STOLO. There must be a way. Let's see the map again, sir. Do you mind ?

CAMILLUS. Not in the least.

[*The* SLAVE *moves away.* CAMILLUS, LUCIUS *and* STOLO *go behind the table and pore over the map.*]

1ST VOICE [*off*]. Halt ! Who goes there ?

2ND VOICE [*off*]. Friend !

1ST VOICE [*off*]. Advance, friend, and be recognised !

CAMILLUS. What's that ?

[*Enter a* SOLDIER.]

Well ?

SOLDIER. There's a man here, sir, who wishes to see you. He says it's on important business. There are several boys with him.

CAMILLUS. Bring him in. [*To* SLAVE.] You may go.

[*The* SLAVE *goes out* L. *Enter the* SCHOOLMASTER, *escorted by the* SOLDIER. *The two* OFFICERS *stand at the back of the stage, and the* SOLDIER *escort, in front* R.]

Well ?

SCHOOLMASTER. May I speak frankly, sir ? I am your friend.

CAMILLUS. Your business ?

SCHOOLMASTER. Merely to tell you that as things are, you will never take Falerii.

CAMILLUS. A very slight reason for you to seek such an important interview. Who told you ?

SCHOOLMASTER. I need no telling. The people of Falerii know it. Look at the walls, the defences. Do you know what quantities of provisions they have laid by ? Do you know the spirit of the people ? You will never reduce this town.

CAMILLUS. Have you seen the siege-engines?

SCHOOLMASTER. They will not make a scrap of difference.

CAMILLUS. You may be right. What then?

SCHOOLMASTER. I can help you.

CAMILLUS. You have something important to say, and I am a man of few words. Stop fencing, out with your proposition, and have done with it. You can help me? Good! Your terms then.

SCHOOLMASTER. Shall I share your glory, shall I share your triumph, shall I even share—the Roman spoils? I am but a poor schoolmaster, but I can save a Tribune's reputation. Marcus Camillus, you cannot go to Falerii, but I have brought Falerii to you.

CAMILLUS. You are very sure of yourself, Schoolmaster.

SCHOOLMASTER. There is no mystery about it, sir. Falerii stands outside your own tent at this moment. Will you then, accept it from me, the poor schoolmaster?

[*He nods to the* SOLDIER *escort, who goes to the tent entrance, and admits five boys of varying ages. Their hands are tied behind them. They stand in a row in front of the table.*]

My own pupils, the dear sons of the chief citizens of Falerii. I brought them out for games and then it was easy, so easy, to walk them into your lines. You can take away your engines and pull down your works now. The city [*He indicates the boys.*] is in your power.

CAMILLUS. Can such a thing be possible? Come, your names.

PHILO. Philo.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——the son of Publius Philo, City Treasurer.

COSSUS. Cossus.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——the son of Fabius Cossus, Commander of the Fortifications.

PENNUS. Pennus.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——the son of Caius Pennus, Priest of Jupiter.

ROSCIUS. Roscius.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——the son of Aulus Roscius, First Justice of Falerii.

SOTIMUS. Sotimus.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——the son of Junius Sotimus, Consul of Falerii. A highly satisfactory batch of prisoners. Do you not think so ?

[CAMILLUS *says nothing. His looks are enough to indicate his grave suspicions.*]

Now, boys, I must say farewell to you, for I shall soon cease to be your teacher. You'll have harder lessons to learn now, for, I warn you, you are going to be prisoners, hostages, perhaps, in the hands of mighty Rome. Bow to your Tribune, then.

[*The boys remain with their heads cast down.*]

The noble fathers of the city will surrender as soon as they know where their sons are. Have I not done well, sir ?

CAMILLUS. I am amazed. Schoolmaster, your unselfish spirit, your exemplary sacrifice, passes my understanding. That you should be ready to give up your school, your livelihood, nay, to risk violent death, for the good of Rome——

SCHOOLMASTER. I can wait for my reward, sir.

CAMILLUS. The Senate will see to that.

SCHOOLMASTER. ——but there is one boon I would ask immediately.

CAMILLUS. What is it ?

SCHOOLMASTER. Allow me to stay in your camp for the present. I cannot go back to Falerii. You appreciate that.

CAMILLUS. Can't you ? Oh well, the camp is yours. You're a Roman like me.

[*The* SCHOOLMASTER *does not answer.*]

You're a Roman, I say. [CAMILLUS *regards him suspiciously.*] Are you a Roman ?

SCHOOLMASTER. No, sir.

CAMILLUS. Where do you hail from ?

SOTIMUS. He was born in Falerii, sir.

SCHOOLMASTER. Silence, you little fool !

SOTIMUS. It's true. He's a traitor.

CAMILLUS. I thought so. No wonder you don't want to go to Falerii. Were you born there ?

SCHOOLMASTER. Yes, sir.

CAMILLUS. Schoolmaster, I'm sorry for you. You think you have been very clever, but even a half-wit could have seen through your schemes. There is one thing even you have forgotten— the character of Camillus. Wicked as you are, you have come neither to a people nor a commander like yourself We Romans know our enemies and we respect them. We carry arms against men armed as we are, and able to defend themselves, not against helpless children, whom we spare when towns are taken. You have broken this law of war by an act of villainy never known before. The Romans know how to punish traitors. Bind him.

[*The* OFFICERS *and the* SOLDIER *bind the* SCHOOLMASTER.]

Come here, boys. Let me loose those bonds.

[*The boys go to* CAMILLUS. *One by one, he unbinds them.*]

CAMILLUS [*to the* SOLDIER]. Fetch the fasces.

[*The* SOLDIER *goes off stage and brings the fasces, a bundle of thick rods bound round an axe.* LUCIUS *and* PHILO *stand behind the* SCHOOLMASTER *guarding him. The* SOLDIER *gives the fasces to* CAMILLUS *who shows them to the boys.*]

Do you know what these are ?

BOYS. No, sir.

CAMILLUS. Well, I'll tell you. They are called "fasces," and they are the emblem of liberty. We use them in Rome for punishing traitors. Here, take one, each of you. For the first time they are going to be used on an enemy traitor, and you shall use them. [*To the* OFFICERS.] Turn the schoolmaster round. Now, like this. [*He beats the* SCHOOLMASTER'S *back.*] Your turn.

[PHILO *beats the* SCHOOLMASTER.]

No, harder. Your turn.

[COSSUS *gives him a blow.*]

Now one each, just to get used to it. Lay on.

[*The other three boys give him one each in turn.*]

That's better. Now take him back with you to Falerii.

BOYS. Thank you, sir

SCHOOLMASTER [*falling on his knees*]. Have mercy. They'll kill me.

CAMILLUS. Get up. What reward do you expect for such treachery?

[*The* OFFICERS *force him to his feet.*]

Now be off.

ROSCIUS. Yes, sir. On to Falerii, boys, on to Falerii!

[*They prod the* SCHOOLMASTER *with their rods and force him out of the tent. The* SOLDIER *follows them.* CAMILLUS *stands at the door watching them as the clamour in the Roman camp rises*—"*What ho! Here's a traitor!*" "*Let him have it, boys!*" "*Harder!*" "*That's the way!*" *etc., etc. It gradually dies down as the band approaches the town walls.*]

CAMILLUS. There they go, halfway across No Man's Land, and the whole army following them. There's a crowd on the city wall. [*The two* OFFICERS *go to the door of the tent.*] Look, they're throwing their hats in the air. And now our men and theirs are dancing round each other like boys. Did you ever see such a sight? [*He comes back into the tent with the others.*] Ah, that's the best day's work I've done for some time.

STOLO. *Are you sure, sir?*

CAMILLUS. Sure? What do you mean? Of course I'm sure.

STOLO. You would have had Falerii for the asking, sir, without hurting the boys and without sacrificing a man. It will be a hard and costly job now. The other Tribunes won't like it, sir.

CAMILLUS. I know the other Tribunes, Stolo. They're jealous lest I should have a second triumph like the one after Veii. That's why I was sent here on the most difficult campaign of all.

LUCIUS. Do you know that they are plotting your downfall, sir?

CAMILLUS. Of course I do. If I win, it may be another triumph. If I lose, it will be exile. I must admit that just now it looks like exile. All the same, it was worth it.

[*The* SLAVE *suddenly comes in and kneels before* CAMILLUS.]

Hallo, what's the matter now? Stand up, man!

SLAVE [*excitedly*]. The city fathers, sir. They've come down from the walls. There is a procession of them, making towards the camp—Philo, Cossus, Sotimus, Roscius, Pennus, and oh! such a crowd with them. They're dressed up in full civic regalia. Do come and see them, sir.

[CAMILLUS *goes again to the tent door.*]

CAMILLUS. Jove omnipotent! Is this an embassy? It can't be. Why, they've got all Falerii with them, and the boys in front of the procession. Listen!

[*Shouts and cheers are heard off stage.* CAMILLUS *comes inside.*]

This looks like being an important meeting. [*To* SLAVE.] Bring me a stool. [*The* SLAVE *brings one from behind the table.*] Yes, put it there. Lucius and Stolo, you stand near the door. [*To* SLAVE.] And you, behind the table, there. Whatever it is, we must be ready.

[CAMILLUS *sits on the stool. The* OFFICERS *and the* SLAVE *take their places. The* SOLDIER *enters.*]

SOLDIER. Junius Sotimus and Fabius Cossus, sir.

CAMILLUS. Let them come in.

[*Enter* SOTIMUS *and* COSSUS. *They stand before* CAMILLUS.]

SOTIMUS. Junius Sotimus, Consul of Falerii, to Marcus Furius Camillus, Military Tribune of Rome. [SOTIMUS *and* COSSUS *bow.* CAMILLUS *acknowledges it.*] We come to surrender into your hands our town of Falerii. You have restored our children, delivered to you by a traitor. We know not how to speak our thanks, but, overcome by a victory at which neither god nor man can feel displeasure, we give ourselves up to you, considering that we shall live more happily under the rule of Rome than under our own law.

CAMILLUS. I thank you, Consul. Does your Senate approve this decision ?

SOTIMUS. We are its mouthpieces, and we come to tell you that since you preferred to keep faith, even in war, to the gaining of a certain victory by treachery, we are under your sovereignty. Send men, therefore, to receive our arms, our hostages, our city with its gates thrown open. You will never have cause to repent of our fidelity, nor we of your dominion.

CAMILLUS [*standing*]. In the name of the Roman state I accept your surrender. But before a final settlement can be drawn up, you must appoint ambassadors to Rome to present your town to the Senate. I have no doubt that they will receive it graciously with little more charge on you than the payment of our army during the period of the siege. Are your sons safe ?

COSSUS. Safe and well, sir. They brought the traitor into the city amid great rejoicing.

CAMILLUS. I saw it, and I am glad. [*To* SOLDIER.] Assemble a cohort. We will go into Falerii. Consul, I await your pleasure.

SOTIMUS. We have but one favour to ask.

CAMILLUS. It is granted. Speak on.

SOTIMUS. It concerns the rods which our sons brought with them. When they had delivered up the traitor, they told us a story. Binding up the rods round an axe, they said that this was the emblem of Roman liberty. We would know more about it.

CAMILLUS. The fasces! [*To* SLAVE.] Bring the fasces.

[*The* SLAVE *goes out.*]

SOTIMUS. What is Rome's emblem is henceforward our emblem.

[*The* SLAVE *comes in again, bringing the fasces.*]

CAMILLUS. You shall have the fasces.

[*The* SLAVE *holds the fasces before the two citizens of Falerii. They examine them.*]

Here is the sign of the Roman liberty. Wherever it goes, the freedom of the people shall triumph. But woe to the ruler who, for his own ends, uses it to spread tyranny and desolation in the land. To him the fasces will be a curse, and he shall fall, choked with his own ambitions. [*To the* SLAVE.] Hoist it on your shoulder, slave, and take it before us to the city. You shall be our lictor, and a free man this day. [*To* SOTIMUS *and* COSSUS.] Romans, I greet you. [*He shakes them both by the hand.*] On our way, then, to the Roman city of Falerii.

[*As the* SLAVE *reaches the door with the fasces, there is a burst of cheering outside.* CAMILLUS *goes out with* SOTIMUS *and* COSSUS, *following the* SLAVE. LUCIUS *and* STOLO *stand at the door to watch, until the cheering dies away, then they re-enter the tent.*]

STOLO. There's a triumph for you. It means something more than the empty spectacle of captives and spoils marching through the streets of Rome. It means friendship and alliance, not just brute subjection.

LUCIUS. Granted. But will Rome like it?

STOLO. What matter? The rabble of any town will go mad when they see a procession, but how much do they know of the real fighting? To my mind this is how all wars should end.

LUCIUS [*going to his drawing of the siege engine*]. To think I spent so much time on you! [*He tears it off the side of the tent in disgust.*] Useless, utterly useless!

STOLO. Not yet, Lucius. Rome has many more enemies still to conquer, enemies not so noble as the people of Falerii. Your machine will be in great demand when the next war breaks out. [*Distant cheers as the procession reaches the city wall.*]

LUCIUS. The next war! I wonder when that will be. You know, I think I can improve, even on this.

[*The two of them are looking at the diagram as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

THE KING ON TOUR (1090)

Prologue

The early Norman kings of England were very rarely at home. Most of their time was spent in visiting their nobles all over the kingdom. They did this partly because of the business they had to transact, but partly too, because it was less expensive for the King to travel about the country, where the people would keep him and his court cheaply. He would spend, with his whole train composed of servants, courtiers, officers, and many hangers-on, a week, or even a month in one place. Here the court lived on food provided by the people of the district and all who could not be got into the castles were billeted out in the houses and cottages, till such a time as the King moved on again. When he had gone, the countryside was often as bare of food as if the locusts had descended upon it.

The organisation of these tours was in the hands of a large body of officials. The Constable saw that law and order were kept, the Marshal forewarned all on the road that the King was to follow. In addition there was the Chamberlain to look after the treasure, the Chaplain, the King's Cook, the Keeper of the King's Hearth, the Master Butler, the Baker, the Sergeant of Venison, and many Food Stewards, Bread Dispensers, Slaughtermen, Water-bearers and soldiers. The most arduous duties probably fell on the King's Purveyor, who was responsible for collecting provisions on the way. On the morning of the King's departure from any place, all was bustle and excitement, but if the King suddenly changed his mind, there was general pandemonium. Such scenes as the following must often have been enacted during those days.

CHARACTERS

THE PURVEYOR'S MAN
THE CONSTABLE
A VILLAGER
THE VILLAGER'S WIFE
A COURTIER
A LADY
SIX SERVANTS

SCENE.—*A narrow alley opening on to a noble's courtyard where the staff of King William II are loading the pack-horses for the next stage of the royal journey.*

[*Enter a* SERVANT *followed by a* VILLAGER *and his* WIFE.]

VILLAGER. You've had a night's lodging in our cottage haven't you? Why don't you pay us then?

SERVANT. I've got no money.

WIFE. That's what you all say. But it's a scandal. You eat our food, sleep in our beds--

SERVANT. Yes, and come away with my clothes full of your fleas. Ugh! [*He scratches.*] Hark 'ee, missus, I had to fight hard enough to get a bed in your cottage last night, hadn't I? You don't think I'm going to pay as well, do you?

WIFE. You're robbers, all of you. It's time somebody complained.

SERVANT. Complained? Who to?

VILLAGER. The King.

SERVANT. Oh-ho! That's a joke, that is. As if he doesn't know. Why, he's the biggest swindler of the lot! [*Realizing what he has said, he suddenly puts his hand to his mouth and looks round in alarm. Then seeing nobody about, he goes on.*] Well, what I mean is, he's not too partic'ler himself. Do you think he pays for his keep? Not likely, and if he doesn't, why should I?

WIFE. Have mercy, sir. The King's men have taken our corn, our beeves, everything we have saved for the winter and the spring sowings, and they've never paid us a penny. How do you think we're going to live through the next months? It means ruin, starvation, for all of us. [*She begins to cry.*]

SERVANT. Now, now, missus, don't start weeping. Here's a penny for you and your good man, but that's about as much as I can afford. The King's going away this morning, so you'll soon be rid of us. Look, they're bringing out the pack-horses now.

VILLAGER. It's a good job for us that he's going.

WIFE. Ay, but a bad one for some other poor folks on the road. Thank'ee, sir.

VILLAGER. If the King's on his way, maybe he'll want a few porters to help with the packing.

SERVANT. Of course he does. Try the Purveyor's office, second turning on your left. [*He points.*] Good luck.

[*As they are going out,* SECOND SERVANT *enters from opposite side.*]

SECOND SERVANT. Ah, there you are. I've been looking for you. Any news?

FIRST SERVANT. We go this morning. They're bringing out the horses now.

SECOND SERVANT [*taking a couple of dice from his wallet*]. Then there's just time for a throw or two, eh?

FIRST SERVANT. Not now. We'd better be getting along, or they'll be looking for us.

SECOND SERVANT. Oh, come on, it won't take us a minute. Here! [*He gives him the dice.*]

FIRST SERVANT. Right! [*He looks left and right, then they both kneel on the ground.* FIRST SERVANT *throws.*]

SECOND SERVANT. Two four!

FIRST SERVANT [*as* SECOND SERVANT *throws*]. One six!

SECOND SERVANT [*as* FIRST SERVANT *throws*]. Three two. That's mine.

[*The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *enters while they are absorbed in the game. He stands behind* FIRST SERVANT *stroking his chin.*]

FIRST SERVANT [*as* SECOND SERVANT *throws*]. Two three!

SECOND SERVANT [*as* FIRST SERVANT *throws*]. Five six! Lucky dog!

FIRST SERVANT [*as* SECOND SERVANT *throws*]. Four two! That's mine.

PURVEYOR'S MAN [*giving* FIRST SERVANT *a kick which sends him sprawling*]. No, that's yours. Now get up, both of you. What do you mean by dicing when there's work to do? Get those horses harnessed, and be quick about it.

FIRST SERVANT. We're carriers, not ostlers.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. You'll do as you're told. Get a move on.

FIRST SERVANT. We're not under your orders. Mind who you're talking to.

PURVEYOR'S MAN You insolent rascal! I'll show you. Are you going?

FIRST SERVANT. No.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Very well, then.

[*He is about to strike the* FIRST SERVANT *with his staff when the* CONSTABLE *enters with a whip in his hand.*]

CONSTABLE. Stop! What's going on here?

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Disregard of orders, sir. I told them to help to harness the horses.

SECOND SERVANT. We've nothing to do with the horses, and we're not under the purveyor's orders. We're carriers, not ostlers.

CONSTABLE. You're here to do your duty when every hand should be busy. The King will be out in short of an hour, and he'll expect to see everything ready. Over to those horses, then.

SECOND SERVANT. But, Constable—

[*The* CONSTABLE *cracks his whip smartly around the calves of the* SECOND SERVANT.]

CONSTABLE. Do as you're told.

SECOND SERVANT. Oo-ooh ! Yes, sir.

CONSTABLE. And hurry ! [*He lifts his whip again, but they are both off stage by now.*] That'll teach them a lesson. If you've any more trouble with those two, just let me know. They're a couple of lazy loons.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Thank you, sir. I may need your help. It's been a terrible week.

CONSTABLE. Oh ?

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Yes, sir. The villagers were obstinate and wouldn't empty their larders. Why, they even burnt the carcasses and poured the wine into the ditches rather than give it to the King. I've had to have some of them flogged.

CONSTABLE. Perhaps they deserve it.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. It's got to be done, but it's making the King very unpopular, sir. I hate this job. A week like this makes me feel like a limp rag.

CONSTABLE. Never mind. We're on our way to-day, and it's lovely weather. You'll feel better when we get to the next halt.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. I hope so. [*He looks off.*] Will you tell them to blow the horn, sir ? The horses are all out now.

CONSTABLE. I'll see to it. You needn't be in too big a hurry. The barber cut the King's face this morning, so you'll have a few minutes to spare.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Thank you, sir.

[*The* CONSTABLE *goes out. The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *takes a tablet from his wallet and begins to check up.*]

Now where's my list? I hope it all comes in. Bread—Andrews at the Thriddings. I don't trust them. Ale—two casks from Hoyt at big Thrift, where we had to break the door down. One cask from Green at Swales' Dell. Venison from John Bowman at Ling Hundred——

[*The sound of a horn is heard.*]

——Oats from Hal Micklefield at the Red Tithing.

[*Enter a* COURTIER *and his* LADY. *She is wiping down his tunic with a cloth.*]

LADY. There. It doesn't show too badly now.

COURTIER. It's no use, Marion. How can I travel all day with broth spilt all over my tunic? Ugh! It's so sticky—here! [*He plucks the tunic with his fingers.*]

LADY. You'll have to make the best of it, Eustace. Your only other tunic is in the laundry. What a mess you're in! [*She wipes him down again.*]

COURTIER. Fancy this happening, to-day of all days! It isn't even possible to borrow a clean one. The clumsy oaf! He spilt at least a quart of the greasy fatty stuff all over me. Can't you get this out?

[*He shows her a big spot and she begins to wipe it. The* VILLAGER *comes in, bowed low with a heavy load tied in a sheet on his back. He bumps into the* COURTIER. *The load falls on the ground and the* VILLAGER *stoops to pick it up.*]

COURTIER. Oh!

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Beg pardon, sir. [*To* VILLAGER.] You clumsy oaf!

COURTIER. Look where you're going, can't you! [*He cuffs the* VILLAGER.]

VILLAGER. I didn't see you, sir. I really didn't, this is so heavy. [*He tries to pick it up but it is too much for him. He looks round for help.*]

LADY. Can't you help him, Eustace? He'll never lift it alone.

COURTIER. Not I. Let him drag the stuff through the mud. I don't care.

PURVEYOR'S MAN [*going to the* VILLAGER'S *assistance*]. Here you are, man. [*He hoists it on to the* VILLAGER'S *back.*] What is it ? [*He looks at the tablet.*] You've got it rather dirty.

VILLAGER. Laundry, sir.

COURTIER. Laundry ? By the rood, my clean tunic.

LADY. Your *clean* tunic, Eustace ?

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Good. Take it to the Master Chamberlain. There are his horses.

COURTIER. Wait a minute, varlet.

VILLAGER. Can't wait, sir. [*He goes off with the bundle.*]

COURTIER [*following him*]. My tunic. I must have it. Come along, Marion.

[*The* COURTIER *and the* LADY *go out after the* VILLAGER. *Enter* FIRST SERVANT *with a large basket.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. What have you got there ?

FIRST SERVANT. Bread from the Thriddings.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Right along. Ask for the Dispenser at the provision train. [*He marks it off on his tablet.*] That's a good job anyway.

[*Enter* SECOND SERVANT *carrying a heavy barrel on his back.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. What's this ?

FIRST SERVANT. Ale. By the mass, I could carry it better inside me.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Take it to the Master Butler—the roan horses on the right.

SECOND SERVANT. It *would* be the farthest away. [*He staggers off with the barrel. The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *marks it off on his tablet.*]

[*Enter a* THIRD SERVANT *carrying another basket. He shows it to the* PURVEYOR'S MAN *who lifts up a cloth and looks inside.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Cakes and dainties. The dappled mare by the penthouse.

[*He marks it off as the* FOURTH SERVANT *enters, carrying on his back a long parcel wrapped in sacking.*]

What's this ? Beef ?

FOURTH SERVANT. No sir, venison. I've brought it all the way from Ling Hundred. Oh, my back !

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Take it to the Cook, along by the kitchen steps there. Don't fall !

[*The* FOURTH SERVANT *goes out as the* PURVEYOR'S MAN *marks it off on his list, then wipes his brow with his sleeve.*]

What a job !

[*Enter* COURTIER *followed by* LADY, *on the way back from the packhorse with the laundry. The* COURTIER *is waving the tunic which he has recovered.*]

COURTIER. A clean tunic ! [*He holds it up before him.*] Not a spot on it.

[*Enter* FIFTH *and* SIXTH SERVANTS.]

FIFTH SERVANT. The provisions are all in, sir. Anything else ?

PURVEYOR'S MAN. I don't think so. Wait. Have you been for the King's bed yet ? The Chamberlain wanted you to fetch it.

FIFTH SERVANT. The bed, sir ? No sir.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Why on earth have you to be reminded of every single thing ! The Chamberlain will be fuming with rage. Fetch the mattress now. And hurry. Take two more men with you for the bedposts and bring them along to the wagon at the far end there.

FIFTH SERVANT. Right, sir.

[*The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *looks at his tablet, the* COURTIER *turns the tunic over in his hands and admires it, the* LADY *looks up at the sky.*]

LADY. How dark it's getting after such a glorious morning. I believe it's beginning to rain. [*She holds out her hand.*] Eustace, you'd better hurry and change. There's not much time left.

[*They go off. The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *looks at the sky, then holds out his hand.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Rain! It's a good job we've got nearly all that luggage packed. [*He calls off stage.*] Hi there!

VOICE OF FIFTH SERVANT [*off*]. Hallo!

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Bring that mattress along, can't you?

VOICE OF FIFTH SERVANT [*off*]. Coming, sir.

[*The* PURVEYOR'S MAN *looks at the sky again, then draws his cloak over his left shoulder.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. It would happen like this. Why can't they get a move on?

[*The horn is blown again off stage.*]

What's the matter now? [*He peers off one side of the stage, then off the other.*] Hi! What are you doing? Leave those packs alone, can't you?

VOICE [*off*]. Orders, sir.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Confound you, I'm the only man who gives orders here. Leave them alone. No! Don't bring them here!

[*The* VILLAGER *staggers in again under his load of laundry.*]

What are you trying on? Have you gone mad?

VILLAGER. No, sir. The Constable says we have to take them all back. *The King isn't going to-day.* It's started to rain, sir.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. What?

VILLAGER. Weather too bad, sir. The King isn't going.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. A plague on the whole house! Why can't—here, get out, you! [*He takes out his tablet again and*

marks it.] Laundry—to the King's Launderer. Why can't the King make up his mind and stick to it? It makes a man look such a fool.

[*The* VILLAGER *goes out. Enter* FIRST SERVANT *carrying the bread basket.*]

Bread? Oh dear! Take it along to the kitchens. [*He marks it off on the tablet.* FIRST SERVANT *goes out. Enter* SECOND SERVANT *carrying the barrel.*]

Off to the buttery with you. [*He marks it on the tablet.*]

SECOND SERVANT. I can't, sir. It's too heavy.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. You must find help on the way.

SECOND SERVANT. Oh, very well, sir.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. If only these fellows would use a little intelligence! The blockheads!

[*Enter* THIRD SERVANT *carrying back the dainties.*]

Dainties! Take them off to the kitchen, and Cook will deal with them.

[*He marks them off on the tablet as the* THIRD SERVANT *goes out Enter* COURTIER *and* LADY.]

COURTIER [*pulling up his tunic*]. There, that's better. Now I feel in fine form for the day's journey.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. There won't be a journey, sir.

COURTIER. But we're ready now. All our goods are packed.

PURVEYOR'S MAN [*desperately*]. Everybody's ready. Every thing's packed. That makes no difference. It's raining, and the King has changed his mind. Look out!

[*Enter* FOURTH SERVANT *carrying the venison. He is followed by the* CONSTABLE.]

CONSTABLE. Ha! Trying to steal the King's venison. were you? You'll do that once too often, my lad, and find yourself on the end of a rope. [*To* PURVEYOR'S MAN.] Take the particulars.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Venison. [*He marks it off on the tablet.*] To the kitchens.

CONSTABLE. I'm coming with you. You don't go out of my sight till you've delivered it.

[FOURTH SERVANT *and* CONSTABLE *go out.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. This is enough to drive a man crazy. What are we going to do with all the stuff? Waste, waste and more waste.

COURTIER. Calm yourself, man. You'll be in a hospital before you know where you are.

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Hopeless confusion! If you had to work like this you'd soon be in a hospital yourself. As if it isn't enough to have the whole neighbourhood buzzing round your ears, asking you questions, threatening to knife you, lying in wait for you. Oh, I'm going mad. [*He looks off stage and sees the two servants bringing the mattress.*] Look at those two. The fools! The maudlin fools!

[FIFTH *and* SIXTH SERVANTS *come in carrying a mattress.*]

What on earth are you doing?

FIFTH SERVANT. Taking the bed to the wagon, sir, just as you told us.

PURVEYOR'S MAN [*shouting*]. *The King isn't going to-day!* Do you hear? *The King isn't going to-day.* Take that thing away. Oh, my head, my head.

[*He holds his head. The men pick up the mattress.*]

COURTIER. Steady, man. You'll have a stroke.

[*He helps* PURVEYOR'S MAN *on to the mattress.*]

PURVEYOR'S MAN. Mad, mad! All of them! Mad!

COURTIER. Take him to the sick room. He'll be better to-morrow.

[*The men move off with the* PURVEYOR'S MAN *on the mattress repeating "Mad, mad!" The* COURTIER *and the* LADY *follow them. As they are going out on one side of the stage the* FIRST *and* SECOND SERVANTS *enter on the other.*]

FIRST SERVANT [*indicating the party with the mattress, now off the stage.*] See that?

SECOND SERVANT. He always did take things too hard. [*He puts his hand into his wallet.*] Time for a throw?

FIRST SERVANT [*looks off stage right and left, then nods*]. Come on, then.

[*They are kneeling down to start their game as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

THE FUGITIVE (1790)

CHARACTERS

STELLA
LOUISE
EDWARD
TWO PRESS GANG OFFICERS
A MAN-SERVANT

SCENE.—*A room in a Georgian house in London, facing the street, about the end of the eighteenth century. It is evening, the blinds are drawn and the candles lit.*

STELLA *is reciting lines, while* LOUISE *sits with the play book and prompts her.*

STELLA. Do hear me again, Louise. I must have these lines perfect, or Mr. Roberto will fume with rage at to-morrow's rehearsal.

LOUISE. H'm ! Silly old man !

STELLA. Oh, I don't blame him. It's only ten days to the performance, and his reputation depends on it. Don't forget that, Louise.

LOUISE. Very well. You can begin that part again.

STELLA [*striking an attitude*]. "My lord, Heaven will reward and bless you. You will never repent what you have done this day."

LOUISE [*reading, in a rather expressionless tone*]. "It is enough, madam, that I have saved a lady's life."

STELLA. "Ah, but whose life, do you think ? Lift up the lamp that is in your hand and look into my face. You are surprised ? Well you might be, my lord, for I—I am the Lady of the Asturias." How's that ?

LOUISE. Rather better. The lines are perfect but the action—— What will Roberto say to this ?—"Lift up that lamp, my lord "— [*She imitates, exaggerating a little* STELLA'S *action.*] Better try that bit again.

[*The men move off with the* PURVEYOR'S MAN *on the mattress repeating "Mad, mad!" The* COURTIER *and the* LADY *follow them. As they are going out on one side of the stage the* FIRST *and* SECOND SERVANTS *enter on the other.*]

FIRST SERVANT [*indicating the party with the mattress, now off the stage.*] See that?

SECOND SERVANT. He always did take things too hard. [*He puts his hand into his wallet.*] Time for a throw?

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[*They are kneeling down to start their game as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

STELLA. I'll come with you. Wait there, Louise, in case we have visitors. [LOUISE *waits nervously. There is shuffling in the next room, then* STELLA'S *voice as she opens the door.*] Good. Help yourself, Edward. You'll find everything you need.

[LOUISE *is listening at the door for any noises in the street.*] Sit down, Louise. We must behave as if nothing has happened.

LOUISE. Will they follow him ?

STELLA. Probably not. Most of them will be a good way off by now.

LOUISE. But if they do——

STELLA. My dear sister, one must take chances, and Edward is no fool. Now come along. Take the book again. Let me see— [LOUISE *holds book. Her hands tremble.*] "My lord, Heaven will reward and bless you. You will never repent what you have done this day."

LOUISE. "It is enough, madam, that I . . . that I . . . Oh, Stella, I can't go on, I can't.

STELLA. Calm yourself, my dear. They haven't caught him yet.

[*Another loud knock.*]

LOUISE [*in a whisper*]. There they are.

STELLA. Stay there. I'll go.

[*She goes to the door, returning in a moment with two tall, burly men.*]

1ST OFFICER. Madam, we hate to disturb you, but we are on a very important mission.

STELLA. What can that have to do with us, pray ?

1ST OFFICER. We are searching for a fugitive.

STELLA. Oh, you are gaolers ? Prison warders ?

1ST OFFICER. No indeed, ma'am. It is our unpleasant business to press men into His Majesty's Navy. Well, one of our men has escaped.

2ND OFFICER. And he may be here.

STELLA. But surely, sir, you don't think an old man with two perfectly harmless and innocent daughters could . . . .

1ST OFFICER. Ma'am, I would put nothing beyond the most innocent-looking people. They're always the deepest. Therefore you are not above suspicion. It happens that my colleague here saw one of these street doors open and shut a few minutes ago. We have to make sure, madam.

STELLA. Of course. It was *this* door, I opened it.

1ST OFFICER. Your frankness amazes me.

STELLA. Those with nothing to hide can afford to be frank. I was expecting my father.

1ST OFFICER. Oh. Then I must ask your sister a few questions.

STELLA. Alas, sir, you cannot. She is deaf and dumb.

[LOUISE'S *eyes open in surprise, but the* OFFICERS *do not see this.*] I will fetch my father. [*She goes to the door and calls.*] Father!

[EDWARD *appears. He is strangely transformed. He has donned a white-tailed wig, shiny black shoes with buckles, and a long coat. His eyebrows are as white as his wig, his face pale. He stoops a little, carrying a silver-headed black stick in his right hand, and a long churchwarden in his left hand.*]

EDWARD [*disguising his voice*]. Who are these—gentlemen?

STELLA. They are looking for a fugitive from a Press Gang, father.

EDWARD. And what do they expect to find here, pray?

1ST OFFICER. Well, sir, we thought, having seen your door open—

EDWARD. Young man, let me tell you something. *I* came in at that door, to get out of the way of your hooligans who turn these respectable streets into bear gardens! I don't know what the London of to-day is coming to.

1ST OFFICER. I'm sorry, sir. We seem to have made a mistake.

EDWARD. I'm afraid you have, unless I'm any good to you. I spent fifteen years on a tea clipper. I've probably forgotten more about seamanship than you'll ever know, young man.

1ST OFFICER. I bow to your superior experience, sir, and apologise for the inconvenience we have caused you.

EDWARD. H'm. You need to. Some of your men are getting too clever. Well, I beg to remind you that this is a private house, and that I, who have been a permanent Secretary to the Treasury, will not brook such insolent interference. Egad, sir, I'll see Mr. Pitt to-morrow.

[EDWARD *pulls a bell, summoning a servant.*]

1ST OFFICER. I repeat, sir, we are sorry.

EDWARD. Sorry? I would have you know, young man, that an Englishman's home is his castle, and defenceless young ladies are not to be terrorised by rogues like you.

[*A* MAN-SERVANT *appears. He looks first at* STELLA *but* EDWARD *gives him little time.*]

Take these men to the door, Humphreys, put them outside, then lock and bolt it.

MAN-SERVANT. Yes, sir.

[EDWARD *watches them out, stands still until he hears the door slam, then comes forward to the two ladies.*]

STELLA. Wonderful! Oh, Edward, what an escape!

EDWARD. Yes. What an escape!

STELLA. You're a marvellous character actor. Isn't he, Louise?

LOUISE. Marvellous! How did I play the deaf and dumb part, Stella?

STELLA. Capital!

[*They all laugh as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

EDWARD. May I keep the disguise on for a while? They may come back again.

STELLA. Of course. We will let you play the part of Father just a little longer.

EDWARD. In that case, let's make ourselves at home. What about a rehearsal to pass the time away? [*He repeats* STELLA'S *lines.*] "My lady, Heaven will reward and bless you. You will never repent what you have done this day."

STELLA. "It is enough, sir, that I have saved the life of a gentleman."

EDWARD. Ay, but of what gentleman? Lift up the lamp that is in your hand, and look into my face. You are surprised? Well you might be, my lady, for I [*he whips off the wig*]—I am Edward Maltravers!

STELLA and LOUISE [*in tones of awe*]. Edward Maltravers!

[*They kneel before him.*]

STELLA. Sir, we kneel before you and thank God for your safe deliverance. How's that?

EDWARD. Oh, good, good.

[*They all laugh.*]

And very, very true.

CURTAIN

THE DOUBLE EYEGLASS (1610)

PROLOGUE

One day, in October, 1608, a young apprentice was playing with the lenses in the shop of Hans Lipperhey, a Dutch optical instrument maker. While doing so, he chanced to place two of these lenses, a concave and a convex one, in a straight line, and look through them. To his astonishment he found that they made distant objects appear very much nearer to the eye. He told his master about this, and Lipperhey placed two of these lenses into a tube and found that he could see the church spire clearly through them. It appeared much larger, but it was upside down. This "double eyeglass" was one day seen by the Marquis of Spinola, who bought it and gave it to Prince Maurice of Nassau. Thus was produced the first telescope the world had ever known.

From this simple discovery, the Italian scientist Galileo got the idea for the telescopes with which he discovered the satellite of Jupiter, the rings of Saturn, and the mountains of the moon.

In those days people used to employ astrologers to foretell their fortunes by the stars, and were therefore greatly interested in any discoveries about them. At the French court, the arrival of Galileo's telescope caused immense excitement. Mary of Medici, Henry IV's queen, was particularly interested in it as the invention of a distinguished fellow-countryman. It is related that, in her eagerness to see the moon through it, she would not wait till the instrument was suitably fixed at the open window, but fell on her knees on the floor, to the consternation of her suite and the amazement of the grave Italian in charge of the telescope.

CHARACTERS

LUCILLE
HENRIETTE } Ladies of the French Court
MARY OF MEDICI, Queen of France
LEONORA CONCINI, the Queen's companion
MONTALTO, an astrologer
ANDREA DE LIZZA, a Priest, the Queen's Secretary
ALFIERI, the Italian in charge of the telescope
THE MECHANIC

SCENE.—*A room in the apartments of* MADAME CONCINI *in the Royal Palace, on a moonlit night in April*, 1610. *There is a door* R. *and an open window* L. *A table with a large "crystal" on it, stands against the right wall. On a stand upstage* C. *there is a revolving globe. The curtains at the back of the stage are black and are covered with signs representing the Zodiac and other astronomical figures.*

When the curtain rises, the stage is empty. HENRIETTE *then appears at the open door and peers round to make sure that nobody is in the room. She enters stealthily. She looks all round the room and draws her breath in surprise.*

HENRIETTE. What a strange room! No wonder Madame allows nobody to come in. A crystal? [*She sits down, shades her eyes and looks into it.*] I can't see anything but green glass. Perhaps I haven't got a future. [*She looks round the room again, going from one object to another.*] How I wish I knew something about the stars!

[LUCILLE *appears at the open door.*]

LUCILLE [*softly*]. Henriette!

HENRIETTE. S—sh!

LUCILLE. Henriette, how dare you! If Madame catches you——

HENRIETTE. S—sh! Don't make a noise, Lucille. Come in.

[LUCILLE *comes in, but is afraid.*]

I've always wanted to see the inside of this room. Here's the chair where Montalto sits to tell Madame's future. Oh, it's thrilling!

LUCILLE. It will be thrilling if we're caught. You know what Madame says.

HENRIETTE. Oh, Madame! She'll never know. Leave the door ajar, then we'll be able to hear better.

LUCILLE. I'm terribly frightened.

HENRIETTE. There's nothing to be frightened about. Look at those queer figures. What are they?

LUCILLE. The signs of the Zodiac.

HENRIETTE. The what?

LUCILLE. The Zodiac. Groups of stars in the sky. You were born under one of those.

HENRIETTE. Was I? I wonder which. What do they all mean, Lucille?

LUCILLE [*pointing*]. The Ram, the Bull, the Heavenly Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Virgin, the Scales, the Scorpion, the Goat, the Water-carrier and the Fish.

HENRIETTE. How clever you are! Do you mean to say that you can see all those in the sky?

LUCILLE. Yes, and so can you, if you know where they are and have enough imagination. There are lots more. Look. [*She takes her to the open window.*] The Plough—can't you see the shafts there, those three stars? The Dragon, the Lion, and over there Orion, the mighty hunter with his belt and his sword—

HENRIETTE. I wish I knew which I was born under. I'd like it to be the Archer. He's rather handsome on the picture. Where is he?

LUCILLE. Down below the skyline. He doesn't come up till long after you are in bed.

HENRIETTE. I'll look out for him.

LUCILLE. You must get Montalto to cast your horoscope one day.

HENRIETTE. Oh, Lucille! Do you think he would?

LUCILLE. Of course, if you pay him well, and don't tell Madame. Isn't the moon lovely to-night?

[*They stand by the open window looking up at the moon. Enter* MADAME CONCINI *very quietly. She stands near the door.*]

MADAME. Lucille! Henriette! [*The girls start.*] In my private room! How dare you come here when you know this room is forbidden you?

LUCILLE. The door was open, Madame.

MADAME. The door was open! So if by chance a door is left open, nobody's secrets are to be safe from your prying eyes.

[LUCILLE *and* HENRIETTE *do not speak.*]

Now explain yourselves. I'll swear that if the truth were known you've been trying those private drawers. Have you?

LUCILLE. No, ma'am.

HENRIETTE. It was all my fault. I saw the open door and I came in. It was foolish, I know, but we haven't disturbed a thing, not one.

MADAME. H'm. People have been beheaded for less.

HENRIETTE. We'll go, madame, if it pleases you.

MADAME. Oh no, you won't. The Queen is coming here now, with Monsieur Montalto and Father de Lizza. You'll stay where you are.

LUCILLE. Oh, please, ma'am!

MADAME. Perhaps we shall be able to teach you something.

[*Enter* QUEEN MARY *with* MONTALTO *and* FATHER DE LIZZA. *They are followed by* ALFIERI *and a* MECHANIC, *carrying the telescope and tripod.*]

QUEEN. You must let the King alone, Montalto, nor must you reveal to him any of your findings. He doesn't trust you. Let him get on with his plans for a German war. If they come to grief, it will teach him a lesson.

MONTALTO. I know they will come to grief, madame. If only he would take heed of the messages given to him by the astrologers.

QUEEN. Consult the stars! Whoever heard of Henry the Great doing that? Let me tell you a secret, Father. When he was a tiny boy he was taken by his mother to old Nostradamus to have his future foretold, but the very sight of the old man's beard so frightened him that he's never faced an astrologer since. You'll have to let him alone. He doesn't like you.

MADAME. He hates us all.

QUEEN. I believe you're right. At times he hates me, though I *am* to be crowned queen and to rule the country in his absence. Well, let him go his way. He'll learn.

DE LIZZA. He may learn too late in a country like this, where every grievance hides a dagger.

QUEEN. He can look after himself. Here is a compatriot of ours, Leonora. This is Signor Alfieri, a pupil of the great Galileo. [*To* ALFIERI.] We are proud of your master, sir, but we admit, we are terribly jealous.

ALFIERI. I am deeply sorry, madame. Why?

QUEEN. Because of the moons of Jupiter.

ALFIERI. The moons of Jupiter? You puzzle me, madame.

QUEEN. Yes, the new stars he discovered with that double eyeglass of his.

ALFIERI. Ah, the Medicean Stars! Your family, madame. You should be proud.

QUEEN. Signor Alfieri, I am no longer a Medici. I am the wife of a French king, and a Bourbon. If Messer Galileo

wants to please me he will call his next star Henri, after the King of France.

ALFIERI. I will inform my master. I am sure he will be glad to consider it.

MADAME. Do you cast horoscopes, Signor Alfieri ?

ALFIERI. Madame, we are scientists. We leave such things to the genius of men like Monsieur Montalto. [*He bows.*]

MONTALTO [*also bowing*]. Even a scientist does not disdain a reward for casting a horoscope, that is, if the reward is handsome enough. If I am right, Messer Galileo gave your Majesty's uncle Ferdinand many years to live. He was dead within twenty-two days.

ALFIERI. I cannot argue on that point. I have merely brought this apparatus to prove my own and Galileo's scientific teachings.

MADAME. Signor Alfieri, for my own part, I respect you, but I cannot believe you. Why, you say the world is round, when everybody can see it is flat !

ALFIERI. Did not Magellan and Francis Drake sail round it ?

MADAME. Could they not have gone in a circle then, as men do, when they are lost in the desert ?

ALFIERI. It is hardly conceivable, madame.

MADAME. Why, pray ? I should have thought it the most natural thing. And yet, to bolster up your absurd speculations you are telling us now that the earth goes round the sun, and the moon round the earth, while all God's stars are doing a perpetual whirligig dance, helter-skelter about His universe. Shame and damnation await you, Signor.

ALFIERI. No man is shamed before God when what he unveils is the truth.

DE LIZZA. All the same, Signor you would be wise to warn Messer Galileo not to incur the displeasure of the Church. These heresies are dangerous.

QUEEN. That is enough, all of you. If you go on like this you'll be brawling soon, and we have more important things to do. I have invited you here that you may see demonstrated this double eyeglass of Messer Galileo's. There is a full moon to-night. Signor, show us the moon through your tube.

MADAME. I won't look through it. I can see the moon well enough without it.

QUEEN. That will do, Leonora. Get your mechanic to set it up at the window, signor.

[ALFIERI *takes the tube from the* MECHANIC, *who goes to the window to set up the tripod.*]

ALFIERI [*showing the tube*]. You have here one of the wonders of the modern world. It has two lenses of opposite natures, one at each end. In this way, distant objects can be made to look near, and small things large. You will see that the moon is a great sphere like our own, that it revolves in space, and that it gets its light from the sun. All this will be made clear to you when you look through the tube. You will see on it mountains and wildernesses, seas and islands. Who knows, therefore, but that there may also be forests of trees, fishes, animals—

DE LIZZA. Heresy!

ALFIERI. I proceed, madame – and even beings like ourselves, human, perhaps more than human.

MONTALTO. Nonsense!

ALFIERI. Very well, sir, nonsense. But I warn you, in a moment you shall see for yourself whether or not Messer Galileo is right.

QUEEN. If he is right, here in this double eyeglass is a discovery that will shake the world.

ALFIERI. It will, madame. We call it a telescope, a glass for seeing long distances, the sail of a ship fifty miles away, a church tower from a hundred miles, as if it were in the next

village, the archers on a distant battlement so clearly that it would seem as if you could knock them off with the point of a pike.

[*He takes the tube and puts it on the tripod.*]

QUEEN. Then why isn't the King here? We went the wrong way about it. Why did we tell him about the mountains of the moon, when all he cares about is a good view of the enemy's fortifications? He *must* know about this. Come, isn't it ready yet?

MECHANIC. The screw is a little stiff, ma'am. I'm trying to raise it.

ALFIERI. Let me help.

[*They try together to pull the telescope up to the eye level, but they fail.*]

ALFIERI. Again.

[*The extending rod refuses to move.*]

MECHANIC [*as* ALFIERI *is tugging at it*]. Don't, sir, you may damage the instrument.

QUEEN. Don't damage it. Come, signor, if the telescope won't come up to me, I must go down to the telescope. Out of the way, mechanic.

[*She sweeps the* MECHANIC *out of the way with her hand, and kneels on both knees, peering through the eyepiece.*]

DE LIZZA [*in an awed voice*]. Her Majesty kneels!

[*They all kneel down.*]

QUEEN. The moon! Can *that* be the moon? Mountains, seas, and misty light. Shadows of the sun falling across wide valleys! Desert wastes and rugged highlands! There may be forests, fishes, birds, even men! It is not the moon we knew. It is another earth.

MADAME. Another earth!

DE LIZZA [*lifting up his hands over the kneeling figures*]. Not unto us, O God, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be praise.

CURTAIN

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS
(1745)

PROLOGUE

In the year 1714, *George, Elector of Hanover, was invited to come over from Germany to become King of England. The Stuarts, who had ruled the country for over a century, were excluded from the throne and remained in banishment.*

In 1715, *James Edward Stuart with his followers made an attempt on the throne, and invaded England from Scotland. The rebellion was defeated, and the would-be King went into exile again. In the Highlands of Scotland there were still many clans which wanted to bring back the Stuarts, and in* 1745, *Charles Edward, the son of James Edward, landed in Scotland with seven friends, to raise the Highlands for the Stuart cause.*

For three weeks the Prince stood almost alone, but on August 19*th*, 1745, *the clans rallied to his standard in the Vale of Glenfinnan, and "Bonnie Prince Charlie" found himself at the head of fifteen hundred men. Here, Charles Edward was proclaimed Regent for his father. The forces of the "Jacobites" as they were called, now grew rapidly and one success followed another. Edinburgh was captured, and England was invaded by way of Carlisle. To the dismay of the Government the rebel army advanced as far as Derby before it was compelled, through lack of support in England, to retreat. The rebellion was finally crushed at the battle of Culloden Moor in April,* 1746, *and Prince Charles, after braving many perils, escaped to France. He was an exile for the rest of his life.*

CHARACTERS

AENEAS MACDONALD, a banker from Paris
SIR THOMAS SHERIDAN, tutor to Prince Charles Edward
WILLIAM MURRAY, Marquis of Tullibardine
PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART
MACDONALD OF CLANRANALD
BISHOP HUGH MACDONALD
MACDONALD OF KEPPOCH
CAMERON OF LOCHIEL
CAPTAIN JOHN SCOTT, an English Officer
Other Highland Chiefs

SCENE.—*Inside a barn in the narrow vale of Glenfinnan, in the Scottish Highlands, on the evening of August 19th, 1745. On the stage are* AENEAS MACDONALD, SIR THOMAS SHERIDAN *and* WILLIAM MURRAY. *The new standard to be carried by the followers of Charles Edward is leaning against the wall.*

SHERIDAN. Is this the place ?

MURRAY. Ay, where the two paths meet. The one you see there goes to Fort Augustus where the red coats are, and the second here, behind us, to Glencoe.

MACDONALD. What a desolate spot, a fit place for the meeting of conspirators !

MURRAY. Shame on you, Macdonald, for saying that word. This is no conspiracy, it is a war for freedom.

MACDONALD. I'd be more in favour of war myself, if there was something like equality on both sides.

MURRAY. So there is.

MACDONALD. Ay, seven men against England. Do you call that a war ?

MURRAY. Seven men, that's true, but we haven't begun yet. Those seven will, God willing, raise up the highland clans, sweep southwards and bridle for good the Hanoverian horse. Where is your courage, Macdonald ?

MACDONALD. Six months ago I was living peacefully in my Paris home, carrying on my business like a respectable citizen. Don't mistake me, Marquis, I am as much Prince Charlie's man as you are, but I still distrust this mad scheme. King Louis promised us help. Where is it? Five thousand well-armed Frenchmen landing on these shores would make us irresistible. As it is——

SHERIDAN. "Put not thy trust in princes." So says the old Book. I doubt not, King Louis will send help, but we must prove ourselves first. The Frenchmen cannot raise the clans.

MACDONALD. Can *we?*

MURRAY. The Prince can. Nobody can resist that brown-eyed boy. What gallantry! What a bearing! He's a Stuart to the core. Even old Lochiel, a cautious man if ever there was one, was thrilled with the sight of him. He'll come with us, will Lochiel, and so will all the others. Long live the Prince!

MACDONALD. Amen. For the Prince's sake, I'll be a conspirator, a rebel, a soldier, what you like, even if it leads me to the gallows. But I'm getting old, and so is Sheridan here. Winter campaigns are not for old men like us.

MURRAY. Winter campaign? Why, we'll be in London by October.

SHERIDAN. I hope so.

MURRAY. Believe me, Macdonald, when the expedition set off from France, I thought the same as you. There were our two little ships bound for the Hebrides, and the whole British navy after them. But we got through, and when we landed in Eriskay, an eagle hovered over the ship. Did you see it? The King of Birds screamed his welcome as we landed on Scottish soil. Friends, can you not see in that the Hand of the Almighty Providence? The same Hand will sustain us until King James the Third is crowned in Westminster, and the Hanoverian horses are back in their German stables again.

SHERIDAN. May that day soon dawn !

MURRAY. It will dawn, Sir Thomas, as sure as you now stand in the Vale of Glenfinnan.

MACDONALD. In the Vale of Glenfinnan to-night, the clans will be gathered. Only by their numbers shall we know whether to look for success or no.

MURRAY. Then here come the first of their numbers. Do you see them, a column along the shore path ?

SHERIDAN. The Prince, God bless him, is at their head. He's a gallant lad. Who would have believed that he had never before worn the tartan ?

MURRAY. Clanranald is with him, and who are those walking behind ? Glenalladale, Dalily, Glencoe and MacDonald of Scotos ? If MacDonald is here, then we have all the Stuarts of Ardshiel and Glengarry. And here comes Bishop Hugh. A mighty company, gentlemen.

[*Enter* PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD *accompanied by* CLANRANALD *and* BISHOP HUGH.]

PRINCE. Good evening, gentlemen, I see you are here before me.

MURRAY. It is a long journey from Kinloch-Moidart, sir.

PRINCE. Longer than I had thought. Whom are we still waiting for ?

MURRAY. Cameron of Lochiel and MacDonald of Keppoch. They both gave their pledge, sir.

PRINCE. They will come. It's a lucky thing we are none of us troubled by too much baggage.

MACDONALD. A poor army cannot have much baggage.

PRINCE. We don't need it. When the invader is a friend he can do without a supply train. Scotland will rise with us.

MACDONALD. I wish I could think so.

CLANRANALD. The Lowland Whigs think so. They know that the drums are beating and the pipes are skirling from glen to glen. The London Whigs think so. They have put a price of thirty thousand pounds on the Prince's head. You know what that means. Dead or alive.

MURRAY. It's a despairing gesture. They know they are beaten.

PRINCE. Not yet, my good Tullibardine, but it is plain that they are badly frightened. Thirty thousand is a high figure for my head, and I welcome it as a good omen. The higher their price, the greater their fear of us.

MURRAY. The third good omen. Did I not tell you, MacDonald?

PRINCE. Gentlemen, our spirit is high, but our resources are slender. King Louis withholds his help until our success is assured. In the meantime the clans must support their own men with arms. Food we shall be provided with.

MACDONALD. By whom?

PRINCE. By the Scottish loyalists who have kept their ancient faith. By the time we get to England, French help will have arrived. Our English friends will flock to our support. Then we shall have arms, money and provisions enough. If London is quaking now, how surely then will the Whigs of London tremble when they know that the King's son is coming with a mighty force to claim for the King his own.

MURRAY. Bravo!

MACDONALD. But the clans are not all with us.

CLANRANALD. Only the islands are doubtful. Well, let them hold back, we can do without them.

BISHOP. We can, as long as we have Keppoch and Lochiel. They mean a thousand men to us.

MACDONALD. Are you sure they will keep their promise?

BISHOP. They *must*. If they do not, I say we are too weak to venture on such a vast undertaking as this, and I would advise the Prince to retire and await a more favourable time.

MACDONALD. I'd say that in any case.

PRINCE. Day after day you have spoken like this to me. Even you, my good Tullibardine, had to be won over by an eagle. Then you, my Bishop, come to me and say I must return to France, and that even the clansmen will betray me to my enemies. One by one I have striven with you until you have sworn your support. Do you think I will give up so easily? If anybody cries "Hold" now, it will not be your Prince. Go home, go home if you feel so inclined, and leave me. But I am going to London. I ask you for the last time, are you going with me? Come, Tullibardine!

MURRAY. I will go with you.

PRINCE. Now, Sir Thomas.

SHERIDAN. My life has been devoted to you, my boy. I cannot desert you now.

PRINCE. Good. Now, Clanranald.

CLANRANALD. If Cameron and Keppoch come—yes.

PRINCE. And if not?

[CLANRANALD *does not answer.*]

That is enough. Now, Bishop.

BISHOP. You try us too much, my son.

PRINCE. Are you sure, Bishop Hugh, that it is not you who are trying me? My life, too, is at stake, and I am ready to risk it. You talk about another time, but you know well that there will be no other time. This is our last chance. Go home if you will, Bishop, but I must have your answer.

BISHOP. Oh, where are Cameron and Keppoch!

PRINCE [*insisting*]. Your answer, Bishop.

BISHOP. God forgive me. My son, you are brave, but so many brave men are foolhardy. I would have you think into what jeopardy you lead your Royal House if you go on this mission unsupported.

PRINCE. Unsupported? Then you will desert me too.

BISHOP. I cannot answer.

PRINCE. You must. Do you hear, Bishop, you *must*.

[*The sound of pipes is heard in the distance.*]

MURRAY. That's the pibroch I can hear. [*They all listen.*] It is the Camerons. Don't you catch the lilt of the Cameron tune?

BISHOP. Thank God!

[*The* BISHOP *kneels down.* CHARLES EDWARD'S *gaze is now fixed off stage as the sound approaches.*]

MURRAY. Three men! Three men on the skyline. Another three, and yet another. Hurray!

[*The music is still approaching, and there is the sound of marching feet.*]

What's this? Look, they've got redcoat prisoners with them. By heaven, this is the fourth good omen. Come, Sir Thomas, come Clanranald, let us go and bring them in.

[MURRAY *and* CLANRANALD *go out.* *The* BISHOP *is still on his knees.*]

BISHOP. Thank God! Thank God!

PRINCE. Come, Bishop Hugh, there's no need for awful decisions now. The clans are gathering. Will you go with us?

BISHOP. With all my heart. [*The* BISHOP *rises.*]

PRINCE. And you, Aeneas?

MACDONALD. I may be a doubter, your Highness, but I have never been a coward.

PRINCE. Good. Now let us see what the fortunes of war have brought.

[*Enter* CLANRANALD *and* MURRAY *with* MACDONALD OF KEPPOCH, CAMERON OF LOCHIEL *and* CAPTAIN JOHN SCOTT, *a captured redcoat commander. His arm is in a sling.*]

LOCHIEL. Your sword, Captain Scott. Here is the person to whom you should deliver it.

SCOTT. Is this the Pretender?

LOCHIEL. Do not speak slightingly, sir. This is our true Prince Charles Edward who shall be King of England and Scotland. Now deliver up your sword.

[LOCHIEL, *who has been carrying* SCOTT'S *sword, holds it out to the Captain to deliver to the* PRINCE. SCOTT *does not move.*] Take it.

SCOTT [*taking the sword*]. I am a subject of King George the Second, the only rightful King. I hand over my sword to Charles Edward Stuart, whose unhappy prisoner I now am. [*He holds out the sword*]

PRINCE [*taking it*]. Captain Scott, the sword you have delivered to me, I now return to you. You will be my messenger. Go then, go and tell your General that Charles Stuart is coming to give him battle. Our men will escort you safely from these parts.

SCOTT [*taking back the sword*]. I thank you, sir. [*He bows, and goes off, accompanied by* LOCHIEL.]

MACDONALD. Was that wise, your Highness?

PRINCE. Wise? How many of these redcoats want to fight against us? Let Captain Scott go and tell his story. They'll change sides soon enough. What news, Keppoch?

KEPPOCH. Good news. The clans are rising everywhere, and the first victory is ours.

MURRAY. The fifth omen! Why, the King is as good as crowned. How did it happen, Keppoch?

KEPPOCH. Could you but see what we have seen! There's hardly a man in all Inverness who has not joined the cause. We have the redcoats shut up in Fort William. This Captain Scott with his two companions was on his way to join them.

Lochiel closed on him and we were there to see the finish at Invergarry. It was a victory without a battle, sir. The redcoats surrendered, and we haven't lost a man.

PRINCE. So much for the British army. Are all your men here?

KEPPOCH. Mercy, your Highness, the fun is only just beginning. The news is going through the Highlands like wildfire, and men are coming in from every clan. Cameron has brought eight hundred, and there are even a hundred and fifty of the MacLeods. Is that enough for ye?

PRINCE. Enough? The King will one day know how to reward you. Bring in your captains.

[*From the wings, other Highland chiefs come in and stand round the stage.*]

Gentlemen, the rightful King of Scotland and England sends you his greetings in the royal proclamation which you have had read to you in your glens. My father James the Eighth calls on you all to recognize him as your sovereign, and to give your allegiance to me, whom he appoints as his Regent. All the soldiers of George of Hanover have been invited to join us. If any of your kinsmen are among them, we will raise their rank, increase their pay and give free pardon to all who may have offended us. If they refuse, they are warned of the risks they run. I can promise you an army, gentlemen. Loyalty to the House of Stuart is not dead, even among those who serve its enemies.

MURRAY. You know the proclamation. Will you fight for the Regent? Will you restore the King to his throne?

ALL. Ay! We will! We will!

MURRAY. Then up with the Royal Standard!

[*They unfold the standard over the* PRINCE'S *head. It bears the Cross of St. Andrew in gold on a blue ground.*]

Remember Wallace, remember Robert the Bruce who put the enemy to flight at the Bannock Burn. Yours is a prize

greater than these. Under this standard, and by your own valour you will surpass the deeds of the heroes, bring victory to Scotland, and a crown to its royal prince. Long live King James!

ALL. James! Long live King James!

PRINCE. My dear and loyal friends, it is not for me to dwell on my father's claims to a throne. You know those well enough or you would not be here with me to-day. I come to my homeland not only to assert my father's rights, but to secure the welfare and happiness of his people. The long years of royal exile will soon end. Here in Glenfinnan I stand at last among my own kinsmen, brave chiefs who will give their all to be present and help in so glorious an enterprise as this. Far beyond the southern hills are the Scottish lowlands and the open shires of England, the homes of the Whigs and Covenanters. By your assistance and that of the just God who never fails to heed the prayers of the oppressed, I do not doubt that our cause will triumph, our enemies will fall, and the King will be brought home to enjoy his own again. On then, to the struggle, and may victory be added to our arms!

BISHOP. Amen.

PRINCE. To your men, then, all of you. Light up your watchfires till the flames pierce the night. Tell them that Prince Charles will not sheath the sword till victory is won.

ALL. We will! We will!

MURRAY. God save King James!

ALL. James! King James! [*They wave their bonnets.*]

SHERIDAN. God save Prince Charles!

ALL. Charles! Prince Charles! Prince Charles!

[*The shout "Prince Charles" is re-echoed and taken up off the stage. Swords are drawn, bonnets are raised on the sword-points to the cheering, as the* CURTAIN *falls.*]

APPOINTMENT AT WIMBLEDON
(1789)

PROLOGUE

It was once the fashion in England for gentlemen to settle "affairs of honour" by fighting duels. Sometimes the weapons were swords, sometimes pistols. The contesting parties met in lonely spots, each attended by his "second" and by two surgeons whose assistance was only too often required.

Although these duels were not lawful they were very common, and there was hardly a man of note who had not fought one at some time or other. They often arose from the most trivial of causes such as personal dislike or hearsay. Many of them had no results, but in others, one party, or even both parties were killed or severely wounded.

One of the strangest duels ever arranged was that between Frederick Duke of York and Colonel Lennox in 1789. It was exceptional for a prince of the royal blood to be involved in such an affair but on this occasion the Duke of York accepted his adversary's challenge. Colonel Lennox, one of the officers in the same regiment as the Duke, was accused of not defending the Duke's honour when he heard an offensive speech against him at the Club. The Duke maintained that the conduct of the Colonel was unworthy that of a gentleman. Lennox tried to get satisfaction and an explanation from the Duke, only to be ordered to his post. Then followed the challenge with the strange consequences that are enacted in this play.

CHARACTERS

FIRST SURGEON
SECOND SURGEON
FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK
LORD RAWDON, his second
COLONEL CHARLES LENNOX
THE EARL OF WINCHILSEA, his second
AN ELEGANT STRANGER

SCENE.—*A part of Wimbledon Common, screened from the rest by bushes. It is early in the morning of May 26th, 1789.*

A man enters. He is dressed in black and wears a broad-brimmed black hat. Under his arm he carries a small mahogany box. He looks round stage, then takes a heavy watch out of his pocket and consults it. He paces the stage once or twice and finally goes off the stage to look among the bushes.

While he is out, a second man enters dressed in precisely the same style and carrying a similar mahogany box. He also looks round the stage, consults his watch and peers off stage on the opposite side. Seeing nothing, he comes back and paces front stage once or twice, then sighs and stands still. While he is in this position, the first man comes back, sees the second who, hearing his footsteps, looks round. Each makes a slight bow to the other without smiling. They are the TWO SURGEONS.

1ST SURGEON. Do you know your client, sir?

[*The* SECOND SURGEON *shakes his head solemnly.*]

Neither do I. Men of some standing, I should say.

2ND SURGEON. Probably. Secret meetings of this kind usually attract the best people.

1ST SURGEON. No doubt, no doubt. The best people are here, but I hate the occasion that brings them.

2ND SURGEON. We have to make the best of it, sir. To refuse an appointment like this means the loss of a fee and of good clients too. I couldn't afford it.

1ST SURGEON. All the same, I almost declined the engagement. You'll admit, sir, it is a somewhat risky undertaking to serve a person who will not disclose his identity.

2ND SURGEON. Pooh! You're safe enough. I'll warrant this is nobody of lower rank than an earl. We're well guarded and well patronised. All the same, it pays to be here in good time and—er—to look around.

1ST SURGEON [*looking at his watch again*]. H'm. Five minutes to go.

[*They separate, and stroll to opposite sides of the stage, looking off. Enter an* ELEGANT STRANGER. *He looks right, looks left, sees the* TWO SURGEONS *and lifts his eyebrows as if to say "I thought so." Then he gives a faint cough. The* TWO SURGEONS *start and turn quickly. The* ELEGANT STRANGER *laughs slyly.*]

ELEGANT STRANGER. Aha-a-a-a-a! That startled the two black crows, eh? Come, my friends, what's the carrion to-day?

1ST SURGEON. You—you do us an injustice, sir.

ELEGANT STRANGER. For which I too must pay a debt of honour? Ah no, sirs, you have no pistols I see: you have only those wicked little knives. [*In a half whisper.*] How I hate those wicked little knives! Mercy, I'd rather be shot dead on the spot than be probed here and probed there, to wriggle and squirm like a worm on a fish-hook. Zounds, how you enjoy it! [*They make signs of protest.*] Oh no, no, no! I've watched you, gentlemen.

2ND SURGEON. Sir, your boorishness ill becomes you.

ELEGANT STRANGER. Oh, tut, tut! 'Tis only my kittle sense of humour. But answer me. 'Tis a duel, eh?

2ND SURGEON. We cannot satisfy your curiosity, sir.

ELEGANT STRANGER. Gentlemen, your silence, if it can so be called, is most eloquent. I know all I want to know. Ah well, to it, to it, my lads! I must be on my way before you begin your little games. Zounds, I wouldn't be caught here

for a King's ransom. But how the tongues will wag at D'Aubigny's! Lord, how the tongues will wag at D'Aubigny's. I bid you good morning, sirs.

1ST SURGEON. Stay, sir. You know our mission now. Can you not tell us whom we serve? We were approached through intermediaries.

ELEGANT STRANGER. Gadzooks! How much did *you* tell *me?* No, no, you left me to guess it, did you not? Well, I'll do the same. But one thing I will tell you. Listen. A certain gentleman in a certain club attacked the honour of a certain other gentleman by saying that he was not a gentleman. Whereat this other gentleman notified the first gentleman of the time and place, so that he may let a hole into him and thus prove that he *is* a gentleman. Ergo, Wimbledon common and the two black crows! Sir, what are your fees for this grim service?

1ST SURGEON. We must not tell you, sir.

ELEGANT STRANGER. Lord, how dumb you both are! But here's a mighty secret. Had you known who one of these gentlemen was, you'd have charged double. So keep your eyes open, and if you can meet me at the bottom of Whitehall at nine this morning and tell me what has happened, faith, I'll double them myself. Odds triggers! How the tongues will wag! Nine o'clock, gentlemen. Adieu.

[*The* ELEGANT STRANGER *bows and goes out.*]

1ST SURGEON. Sir, I have grave misgivings about the outcome of this affair.

2ND SURGEON. Tush, man. How do you make that out?

1ST SURGEON. If this first gentleman, being a notable person, is unhappily dispatched, we shall be privy to the deed. The consequences sir, the consequences!

2ND SURGEON. Consequences? Come, come! All you have to do is to say your *Nunc Dimittis* and fly like the wind. Nobody then will be any the wiser.

1ST SURGEON. But we have already been observed. It will not be difficult to apprehend us both. For my wife and children, sir, I tremble.

2ND SURGEON. Fie, fie! What a liver you have! That will not help you now that you are contracted. Come, face the future like a man. A duel, man, is a welcome diversion from the daily grind. Of course, if blood is let, 'twill be somewhat of a misfortune, I grant you. However, let's not think about that. [*He looks round.*] Take up your stand, sir. Here comes the first pigeon.

[*The* TWO SURGEONS *stand at the back of the stage. Enter* LORD RAWDON *followed by* FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK. RAWDON *carries a box with a brace of pistols in it. The* TWO SURGEONS *recognize the* DUKE *and show signs of surprise. They follow the* DUKE *and* RAWDON *with their eyes during the whole of the ensuing conversation.*]

RAWDON. This is the place, sir. A quiet secluded spot if ever there was one. You agree, sir?

FREDERICK. I compliment you, Rawdon. Our secret has been well kept. [*To* SURGEONS.] Has anybody passed this way?

2ND SURGEON [*quickly and boldly*] Not a soul, sir.

[*The* FIRST SURGEON *looks at him with amazement.*]

FREDERICK. Good. Look among the bushes, Rawdon. We must make doubly sure.

[*They go off to look.*]

1ST SURGEON. The Duke of York! Sir, we are lost!

2ND SURGEON. On the contrary, friend, we are saved. Where's the man, I ask you, would dare to put a ball into the King's son? Zounds, I'd like to see him try.

1ST SURGEON. You're *very* like to see it. The young men of to-day are desperadoes, sir.

2ND SURGEON. Nonsense! A stage duel, that is what you're going to see,—a fight to the death, with blank shot. Oh-ho! Here comes the second pigeon.

[*Enter* COLONEL LENNOX *followed by the* EARL OF WINCHILSEA. WINCHILSEA *carries a box with a brace of pistols in it.*]

WINCHILSEA [*to* SURGEONS]. Has the other party arrived ?

1ST SURGEON. Yes, sir. [*He nods towards the bushes.*]

LENNOX. Ha ! Better than I had expected.

WINCHILSEA. You're not nervous, Lennox ?

LENNOX. Nervous ? To-day, I'll make history if ever man did. As for my duelling with the King's son—well, this is a free country, isn't it ? Even its princes need to be taught not to bandy about insults indiscriminately. I welcome the honour of being the first to teach that lesson. You'll stand by me, sir ?

WINCHILSEA. I am your second, and therefore your sworn accomplice. Have no fear.

LENNOX. Good. Here they come.

[LENNOX *goes to one side of the stage and faces* FREDERICK *and* RAWDON *as they come in at the other.* WINCHILSEA *remains in the centre.* RAWDON *joins* WINCHILSEA *in the centre.* FREDERICK *goes to the side of the stage opposite to* LENNOX. WINCHILSEA *and* RAWDON *bow to each other.* FREDERICK *and* LENNOX *also bow formally from opposite sides of the stage.* RAWDON *and* WINCHILSEA *exchange the boxes and each opens the other's box, taking out one pistol, and then the second, and examining them to see that they are properly loaded.*]

FREDERICK. We will use the Colonel's pistols. He may then be able to shoot better.

[LENNOX *winces.* WINCHILSEA *puts* FREDERICK'S *pistols back into the box and places the box at the back of the stage by the* SURGEONS, *then takes the other empty box from* RAWDON *and puts it with the first.* RAWDON *then advances to* FREDERICK *with the two pistols.* FREDERICK *takes one.* RAWDON *then crosses the stage to* LENNOX *who takes the other.*]

RAWDON [*to* LENNOX]. You will stand here, sir. [*He marks the spot with his foot and* LENNOX *stands on it.*]

[RAWDON *now walks twelve paces and marks* FREDERICK'S *place at the other end of the stage.* WINCHILSEA *goes over to where* LENNOX *is standing, and the two seconds exchange a few final words with their principals.*]

WINCHILSEA [*earnestly*]. You're doing well, colonel, to keep your nerve like this. Hold it, man. I admire you.

LENNOX [*grimly*]. Have no fear. You'll never hear it said again in the London Clubs that the Lennoxes won't fight.

RAWDON [*beaming*]. Your Royal Highness is cool, beautifully cool, but don't be in a hurry. These things are best done deliberately, and therefore, surely.

FREDERICK [*haughtily*]. I know what I'm about. Rawdon. Please to keep your eyes open, and when the time comes—act quickly.

RAWDON. Very good, sir, and all good fortune attend you. [*He shakes* FREDERICK'S *hand warmly.*]

WINCHILSEA [*to* LENNOX]. And don't get flurried. On the word of command, round, sight and fire! I'll be at hand.

LENNOX. You're an honest friend, sir. Wish me well, then.

WINCHILSEA. I do, most heartily. [*They shake hands.*]

[WINCHILSEA *and* RAWDON *now go to the centre of the stage.*]

RAWDON [*to the two principals*]. Gentlemen, you know the rules. You will stand back to back. [*They do so.*] I shall first give you a moment to collect yourselves, and then on the word, you will turn and fire. Are you ready, gentlemen?

[*There is now a pause of a few seconds.* LENNOX *is tense and in deadly earnest, gripping the butt of his pistol.* FREDERICK *is completely relaxed, waiting with apparent nonchalance for the word of command. The two seconds are on the alert. The* SURGEONS *look on with concern.*]

RAWDON. FIRE!

[LENNOX *turns quickly, aims and fires.* FREDERICK, *even while* LENNOX *fires, faces round easily and disdainfully. He does*

not even raise his pistol. LENNOX'S *shot misses. The* SURGEONS *rush forward, one to each man. A yard or two away, they stop dead when each sees that his man is not injured. Each backs a step, thinking that the shooting might be taken up again. When it is not, they look questioningly at* RAWDON, *who is directing the duel.*]

RAWDON [*raising his hand and advancing towards* FREDERICK. *He is in high glee.*] Enough, enough, gentlemen.

LENNOX. But His Royal Highness has not fired.

RAWDON. It was not the Duke's intention to fire. My illustrious friend never had any feelings of animosity against Colonel Lennox, but came out at his invitation with no other desire than to give him satisfaction. He hopes he has succeeded in so doing.

LENNOX [*after a pause*]. I hope His Royal Highness will fire. [*He is holding his pistol down at his side.*]

FREDERICK. Colonel Lennox may wish to take my life. I have no desire whatever to take his. Is the Colonel satisfied ?

[WINCHILSEA *goes to* LENNOX. *They talk.* RAWDON *seizes this opportunity to skip across to* FREDERICK *and press his arm.*]

RAWDON. Wonderful, sir ! A masterly exhibition. Keep up your spirit, sir. Drive the lesson home.

LENNOX [*to* WINCHILSEA]. I would accept that.

[WINCHILSEA *steps towards centre.* RAWDON, *on seeing him, also steps back.*]

WINCHILSEA. Perhaps His Royal Highness will not object to saying that he considers Colonel Lennox a man of honour and a gentleman.

FREDERICK. I shall do no such thing. I came here to give Colonel Lennox the satisfaction he demanded and I do not intend to return his fire. If he is not satisfied, he can have another shot.

LENNOX [*vainly hiding his passion*]. Sir, will you fire ?

FREDERICK Certainly not.

LENNOX. Then there is no more . . . . [*He is raising his pistol.* WINCHILSEA, *seeing possible tragedy ahead, quickly goes up to* LENNOX.]

WINCHILSEA. Exactly, sir. You anticipate my very words. There is no more use for the pistols. With your permission, sir.

[*He relieves* LENNOX *of his pistol, then he goes to* FREDERICK.]

By your leave, sir.

[FREDERICK *gives up his pistol.* WINCHILSEA *now goes to the back of the stage and puts the two pistols into the empty box.*]

RAWDON. I perceive, gentlemen, that our little tête-à-tête is at an end. The Colonel has received satisfaction ?

[*Pause.* LENNOX *turns his head away.*]

His Royal Highness has no desire to challenge the decision now arrived at ?

FREDERICK. Not the least.

[WINCHILSEA *brings the two boxes with the pistols in and gives one to* RAWDON.]

RAWDON. Then, I take it, we may all go away to breakfast and congratulate ourselves on this most agreeable outcome of what might have been an unpleasant and, may I say, lamentable encounter. Come, your Royal Highness, this morning air makes a man hungry. The coach is waiting.

[RAWDON *bows to* WINCHILSEA *and* LENNOX, *then* FREDERICK *bows. Only* WINCHILSEA *bows in reply.* LENNOX *stands stubbornly erect.*]

FREDERICK [*as he goes off with* RAWDON]. One must expect such manners.

[LENNOX, *hearing what* FREDERICK *has said and stung by the remark, makes as if to follow.* WINCHILSEA *raises his hand.*]

WINCHILSEA. Keep your temper, man.

LENNOX. Winchilsea, I've had as much as I can bear. Gentleman or no gentleman, I'd like to lay my hands on him.

WINCHILSEA. Steady, man, steady. Remember you're dealing with the blood royal.

LENNOX. An unmannerly boor!

WINCHILSEA. Unmannerly perhaps, but deuced clever, and not a little brave. You'll grant that, Lennox. I must say, I admire the way he stood up to you . . . .

LENNOX. And then proceeded to hide behind the purple velvet of royalty. A disgusting exhibition!

WINCHILSEA Granted. But all the same, you would have found it hard to fire on the blood royal.

LENNOX. Would I? But for you——

WINCHILSEA. But for me you'd soon be hanging from a rope noose. Come, sir, you must keep up your spirits. Let's be going. Will you breakfast at the club?

LENNOX. How could I with this affair made public? I'll resign my commission.

WINCHILSEA. Bah! You'll think better of it soon. Let us be going.

[*They are about to go off when the* 1ST SURGEON *steps forward.*]

1ST SURGEON. Excuse me, sir, there is a little matter——

WINCHILSEA. Ah, your fees!

1ST SURGEON. Exactly, sir.

WINCHILSEA. You'll be paid by the gentleman who engaged you. Call on him at once. Good morning, sirs.

[WINCHILSEA *and* LENNOX *go out.*]

1ST SURGEON. This is irregular. I've always had my fee on the spot.

2ND SURGEON. I should have thought the entertainment was worth even the loss of a fee. Zounds, man, you've seen something to-day that some people would pay a fortune for.

1ST SURGEON. They may pay what they like. It's the fee I want.

2ND SURGEON. Then be quick and get it.

1ST SURGEON. Quick ?

2ND SURGEON. Yes. Have you forgotten the elegant gentleman ? We're to be at the bottom of Whitehall at nine.

1ST SURGEON. Why, of course, to double the fee.

2ND SURGEON. And you can't collect the second until you know what the first is. But, my dear good friend, don't you realize that this little story would earn a fee at every telling ? Before I've finished with it, it will be in every club and coffee house in London. Shall we go ?

1ST SURGEON. I'm with you, sir.

2ND SURGEON [*as they go out*]. Then if you don't earn your fee at least ten times over, I'm a Dutchman. Come, we'll fetch the horses.

CURTAIN

THE PATCHWORK COUNTERPANES
(1818)

PROLOGUE

Elizabeth Fry, the wife of a London banker, became interested in the poor. Her passion for helping them led her one day to the women's prison at Newgate where she saw scenes that horrified her. In those days all prisoners lived under appalling conditions. Their one large room was usually filthy and squalid, their clothing was generally ragged and dirty, and because they were given nothing to occupy their time they became vicious and debased.

When Mrs. Fry first asked permission to go among the prisoners alone, she was warned that she would most likely be assaulted, but she was not afraid. In the end she gained the affection of the women prisoners, and was allowed to visit them regularly. She started a school for the children in the prison, and taught the women to occupy their time in patchwork, embroidery and such occupations. She convinced the authorities that the humane treatment of prisoners was the first step towards reforming them; and her methods were copied all over Europe.

The scene which follows is entirely imaginary, but it gives some idea of the occupations of the prisoners and of the great change which came over them as a result of the new treatment.

CHARACTERS

BELINDA, *the "group Monitor"*
SERENA, *condemned to transportation*
BESS, *condemned to transportation*
ANNIE, *an old offender, also condemned to transportation*
LUCY, *a half-witted girl*
MARY, *the prisoner who teaches the children*
ELIZABETH FRY

SCENE.—*The laundry room of Newgate Prison, June,* 1818 *Doors up stage Right and Left. On the right down stage is a small table on which are two patchwork counterpanes and a pile of small pieces of cloth. On the backs of the wooden chairs are articles of clothing which the prisoners have been repairing and patching. But they are not sewing now.*

ANNIE *is sitting on a chair in a faint while the others try to revive her.* BESS *is applying a wet cloth to her forehead and* BELINDA *wrings this out at a bowl which stands on a chair near by and passes it to* BESS. SERENA *enters* R.

BELINDA. What happened, Serena ?

SERENA. The same thing as always happens with Hawkins whenever we have a newcomer. She couldn't find her purse.

BELINDA. Who ? Annie ?

SERENA. Yes. She swears she had it on her last night when they brought her in and that there was three and six in it. "Enough to keep me in beer for a week," she said. And now it's gone. I'd bet Hawkins has it, the thief. He's done this before. So Annie goes up to him and says, "Hey, Bully, you'd better tip my purse up."

BESS. So that's how it all started.

SERENA. Yes. He screwed his ugly face up in a sort of sneer and said, "You gaolbirds don't need purses now." "Oh, don't we ?" she says. That got her temper up proper. "Well, I'll show you," and with that she landed him the finest crack on the face that ever I saw. Well, he's bigger than she is, and that's that.

BELINDA. Where is he now ?

SERENA. Can't you guess ? Gone to report to Governor Newman of course. He'll tell all his side of the story, but there's one thing he won't say. He's got Annie's purse.

BELINDA. Be careful what you're saying, Serena.

SERENA. Who else could it be? Since the lady came here we've always trusted each other, haven't we? But Hawkins is the sort that'll stop at nothing to make trouble, and if he can he'll spoil everything for us.

BESS. But what can he do?

SERENA. A lot. In the first place, he's on the right side of the Governor; in the second, he hates all this sewing and schooling. "Mrs. Fry's mad schemes" he calls it. "Prisoners have no right to be happy," he says. "They come here to suffer." So he does his best to make us suffer. He'll stop the lady from coming if he can, and he's got his chance now.

BESS. Serena, you don't think—

BELINDA. Quiet, Bess, she's coming round.

[ANNIE *moves her head, and clenches her fists.*]

ANNIE. You've got it! Give it to me! Oh! Don't kick me! Oh! [*She opens her eyes.*] Where is he?

BESS. Far enough away, my dear. Now don't talk.

ANNIE. He's got my purse. I saw him take it.

BESS. Be quiet, Annie. There now. [*She puts another damp cloth to Annie's forehead.*]

ANNIE [*snatching the cloth away and throwing it to one side.*] Take the thing away, can't you? I'm going for that gaoler. He's got my purse. [*She tries to rise.*] Oh!

BESS. It's no good, Annie, you can't do anything about it. Do try to keep calm.

ANNIE. Can't do anything! Can't I? I'll show him. I'll gouge his eyes out!

BESS. Annie!

BELINDA. Don't take any notice. That's just what I felt like till it passed off. But listen, all of you. After this you'll take care of your money, especially you, Bess. You can't get out of here till you've paid Hawkins his release money. You've already done your sentence and six months besides. Don't let him steal your money before you've had time to give it to him.

[ANNIE'S *glance flits quickly from* BELINDA *to* BESS *and then she becomes languid again.*]

ANNIE. Help me out, somebody.

[BESS *and* BELINDA *raise her from her chair, and then* BESS *puts her arm round* ANNIE *and helps her off the stage.* BELINDA *and* SERENA *sit down.* BELINDA *takes a patchwork counterpane and begins to sew.* SERENA *takes one of the other garments.*]

BELINDA. What's going to happen now ?

SERENA. Anything may happen. You remember what the Governor said—" Mrs. Fry's new scheme depends on the behaviour of all you women. If it is to be carried on, the rules must be kept and we must have good conduct." Those were his very words.

BELINDA. We have kept the rules, haven't we ?

SERENA. You ought to know, being the monitor, but it'll be hard for you to explain this away.

BELINDA. Things were going so well. Since Mrs. Fry started the school and found us something to do, it's been so different. Why did we have to have another woman in our group ?

SERENA. Why ? Because Annie was caught picking pockets in the street and she had to go to prison. This is the only prison that can take her and ours is the only group. But you won't have her long, Belinda.

BELINDA. Why ?

SERENA. She's going away—with me.

BELINDA. Serena !

SERENA. It's true. They've just told us we go aboard the transport to-morrow—for Australia. It's waiting for us on the river. You and the others will still be here in this awful place. Bess will be free, but Annie and I will be going together to a new and terrible land. Mrs. Fry is coming to see us off. Pray for us, Lindy, won't you ? Pray for us.

[SERENA *weeps.* BELINDA *lays down her sewing to comfort her.*]

BELINDA. Of course we will, Serena. Don't take it so hard, dear. Can't you see, it's a new start in a world where your past will be dead and gone ?

SERENA. Not dead, Lindy, we'll be convicts just the same. What will they do to us ? What will they do to us ?

[*Enter* BESS.]

BESS. I took her upstairs. She's lying down now. My ! What language ! I've never heard the like since before Mrs. Fry came here. No wonder they call her "Foul-mouthed Annie."

BELINDA. The new ones are all alike.

SERENA. Don't forget, Lindy, we were all like that once.

BELINDA. Ay, God have mercy on us. But it's different now. Mrs. Fry's an angel from heaven.

BESS. Serena, you've been crying. Have you lost something too ?

SERENA. Only my happiness, Bess. Tell her, Lindy.

BELINDA. Serena goes aboard the transport to-morrow.

BESS. To Australia ? Oh, Lindy !

BELINDA. Yes, to-morrow, and Annie is going with her.

BESS. That means we'll never see you again. I'm sorry. Oh, why can't they leave us alone ! Why must they always keep us here till we learn to love each other, then tear us apart like this ? It's just as if we were animals or slaves. I suppose we are slaves in a way.

SERENA. Don't say that, Bess. It can't be helped. Perhaps, as Belinda says, there is a different life in Australia—fresh air and sun, fields, trees and a new start with the prison and the past left behind. It's just that I can't——

BESS. No ! Let me go— in your place, I mean. I could put on one of those hoods and they'd never know till we were away. It's worth trying, isn't it ?

SERENA. No, Bessie, they'd be sure to find out, and then it would be the transport for both of us, and years and years of hard labour. It isn't worth it. Just give me your prayers.

BESS. Is that all ?

SERENA. To me it's everything.

BESS. But it isn't enough. You must take something. I know. What about the money I've saved to pay my way out ? The gaoler doesn't deserve it, anyway, and I can start saving again.

SERENA. I can't take it, Bessie.

BESS. You must. Where's my purse ? [*She feels in a pocket in her dress.*] Why, it isn't in my pocket. I could swear I had it here only ten minutes ago.

BELINDA. It can't be far away. Look on the floor.

[*They all look on the floor but they do not find the purse.*]

SERENA. It isn't here.

BESS. It's gone then, Serena, your gift and my freedom. What are we going to do now ?

SERENA. It isn't in this room. If you dropped it, Bess, somebody has picked it up. If you didn't drop it, what then ?

BESS [*shocked*]. Serena !

SERENA. You know what foul-mouthed Annie was brought in here for ?

BELINDA. Be quiet, there's somebody coming.

[*They pick up odd garments and try to look composed.* MARY, *the prison schoolmistress, comes in. Their restraint vanishes with a sigh.*]

MARY. Hallo, still busy ?

SERENA. No, we thought you were somebody else. How's the little family ?

MARY. Doing fine. They've gone mad on oranges and lemons to-day.

SERENA. Oranges and lemons ?

MARY. Yes, the nursery rhyme. You know—

[*sings*] "Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of Saint Clements."

When they'd learnt it, little Will Stone said to me, "What are oranges and what are lemons ?" Then it suddenly struck me that they'd never in their lives seen or tasted them. Poor little things, it took me half an hour to try to explain to them what something sour tastes like.

BELINDA. So that's school, is it ? I thought you taught them to read and write.

MARY. Of course I do. They've been writing about oranges and lemons all day, *and* doing sums about them. They think it's grand. Ah well ! Any mending I can do ?

BELINDA. Try this. There's a needle and thread in the box.

[MARY *takes up the mending.*]

MARY. Who's the newcomer ?

BELINDA. What, Annie ? Everybody knows Annie. She sings songs and picks pockets.

MARY. She doesn't know *us*. She thinks we've still got beer on tap.

SERENA. What ?

MARY. She does. As I was coming along here I saw her in the hall with little half-wit Lucy calling for beer. "Hurry up, Mr. Turnkey," she said. "I've got money for beer." Then when she came to the wall where the barrels used to be she let out an awful string of oaths and said, "Why don't you have me put into a real prison instead of this here chapel of yours ?"

SERENA. Money for beer ? She's got money for beer ? I thought so. I've got a good idea where your purse is, Bess.

BESS. But I left her lying down.

BELINDA. It doesn't seem as if she's lying down now Listen.

[ANNIE'S *voice can be heard off as she comes nearer.*]

ANNIE. Beer! How do they think I'm going to exist i this place without a drop of beer and liquor? And me wit the money to pay for it.

[ANNIE *appears at the door.* LUCY *is with her.*]

Who's at the bottom of all this? Speak up, you long-face mealy-mouthed hags! Who's trying to turn this place into nonconformist chapel?

[*The women are silent.*]

LUCY. Oh, it ain't any o' them, Annie.

ANNIE. Who is it, then? Just let me get my hands on her

LUCY. Why, it's—

SERENA. Lucy, be quiet. [*To* ANNIE.] What do you want?

ANNIE. You know what I want.

SERENA. You couldn't pay for it if you could get it.

ANNIE. Oh, couldn't I? I've got money all right.

SERENA. Where from?

ANNIE. What's that to you?

SERENA. More than you think. You stole that money.

ANNIE. Oh, did I? You think I'm fool enough to keep all my money in one purse, don't you? Well, that's where you're wrong. I've got ways of hiding money—more ways than one.

SERENA. You stole that money. [*She advances on* ANNIE.]

ANNIE. Keep your hands off me!

SERENA. All of you, quick!

[*The others rush to* SERENA'S *help. There is a struggle.* MARY, BESS *and* BELINDA *pin down* ANNIE'S *arms while* SERENA *searches her. She struggles, tries to scream, but a hand is clapped over her mouth.*]

LUCY. Hawkins ! Hawkins ! [*She is running off to fetch the gaoler.*]

SERENA. Come here, you ! [*She runs after her, brings her back and flings her roughly into a chair.*] Stay there. [*She continues her search and brings out a brown leather purse.*] There ! Your purse, Bess. You can let her go now. [*She gives* BESS *the purse.*] Look after it. You can't afford to leave things lying about here any longer.

ANNIE. Well, you know now. I did steal it, and I'm not sorry.

MARY. The more shame on you.

ANNIE. Here, what's come over this place ? Last time I was in, things were different. We had a good time then, didn't we ?

SERENA. Yes, drinking, brawling, fighting and tearing each other's hair. That's all stopped now. We've found something more useful to do.

ANNIE. It looks like it, with all this mess about. You're more like a Sunday School sewing meeting than a set of old gaolbirds. What's at the bottom of it ?

BELINDA. You'll know soon enough. The lady'll be here any moment now.

ANNIE. The lady ? Who's she ?

BELINDA. Mrs. Fry. You know what the prison was like before she came here—a filthy stinking place, and we were no better. The very day she first set foot in here, I was lying drunk on the stone floor. But that's all changed.

ANNIE. Go on.

BELINDA. She brought us brooms and buckets to clean the place with. Then she started a school in a spare room, and Mary here teaches the little ones to read and write. Then she gave us needles and thread to mend our things, and lots of patches to make the patchwork counterpanes you see there.

We get paid for what we do, and the counterpanes are goi to Australia for the convicts.

ANNIE [*curtseying sarcastically*]. Oh, how nice! My dea ladies, how very very nice! So your next job will be to giv me a bath and dress my hair and send me off to Australia i a clean white pinny! I'll see you —— [*She looks toward the door.*] Oh!

[MRS. FRY, *in Quaker costume, carrying a small Bible, ha appeared at the door.* ANNIE, *momentarily overwhelmed b the suddenness of this, steps back. The rest stand as* MRS FRY *comes in.*]

BESS. Mrs Fry! [*curtseying*]. Good day, ma'am.

BELINDA [*curtseying*]. Good day, ma'am.

MARY [*curtseying*]. Good day, ma'am.

[SERENA *moves a chair forward for* MRS. FRY.]

MRS. FRY. Good day, all of you. Good day, Lucy [LUCY *curtseys awkwardly.* MRS. FRY *addresses* ANNIE]. And good day to you. You're Annie, are you not? I've been asking about you.

[ANNIE *does not answer, but turns her head arrogantly away.* MRS. FRY *takes no apparent notice of this.*]

BELINDA. We've finished all the patching, ma'am, two jackets and three pairs of trousers, besides the shirts you brought.

MRS. FRY. That's good. I'll have some more work for you to-morrow.

SERENA. But that's not all. Look at our two new counterpanes. You take one, Mary.

[MARY *takes a counterpane and they unfold them before* MRS. FRY.]

MRS. FRY. Why, just the thing. I'll see Mr. Dixon and he'll pay us for them. You can tie them up and leave them with Hawkins. Have you enough patches?

SERENA. Plenty, ma'am, we're starting the third one to-night, only I won't be here to help finish it. I'm due for the transport to-morrow.

MRS. FRY. I know. You poor child. If only we could see the end of all this transportation ! But the government won't hear of it.

BELINDA. We might get it finished to-night, ma'am, if we all set to work. It's better than sitting moping, especially to-night.

MRS. FRY. That's an idea. Perhaps Annie will help you too.

ANNIE. No I won't. Do you think I'd join your workhouse party ? Not likely.

MRS. FRY. But what will you do ?

ANNIE. We always used to have a good time the night before the transports went out.

MRS. FRY. I'm afraid that means giving everybody else a bad time. That's all done with, Annie. You'll find no beer on tap now.

ANNIE [*defiantly*]. Oh, so you're the one who stopped the beer ! I might ha' known as much. Why can't you leave people alone to live their own lives ?

MRS. FRY. Because God sends his servants out to save sinners.

ANNIE. And if we don't want to be saved ? You leave us alone, you with your Bible readings and prayers and sewing-meetings. Take yourself off, can't you, and leave us to rot. It's all we're fit for.

[MRS. FRY *stands and faces* ANNIE.]

MRS. FRY. Come here, Annie.

[ANNIE *comes forward defiantly and looks Mrs. Fry in the face.*]

BELINDA. Don't take any notice of her ma'am She's beside herself.

MRS. FRY. No, Belinda, she's a right to say what she thinks. But I too have a right to tell her that, whether it be in Kensington or Newgate or in Australia, the love of God will one day find her out.

ANNIE. Do you know what I am ?

MRS. FRY. Yes, Annie, you're one of God's children, like the rest of us.

ANNIE. A street singer, and a pickpocket. I was a criminal yesterday and I'll be a criminal to-morrow. Don't try to stop me, you can't do it.

MRS. FRY. With God, Annie, all things are possible.

ANNIE. Oh, you make me sick, you who talk about the love of God. What do you know about life in the London streets ? You're a fine lady. You've never been turned out without a penny in your pocket, to beg or steal for a living. I've done it since I was so high.

MRS. FRY. Perhaps God thinks it's time you had a change.

ANNIE. Do you know what they call me ? Foul-mouthed Annie, who has never known what this love of yours is like. Would you, great lady as you are, take Foul-mouthed Annie into your home, feed her, clothe her and warm her before your own fire ? I bet you wouldn't. You're like all the others. You'd like to know what real wickedness is and so you come spying on us. You like to feel how good you are, so you play a nice game, pitying the poor prisoners. Go back home to your children, and leave us alone.

MRS. FRY. I have nine children, but not one of them is dearer to me than you are at this moment.

ANNIE. You can't prove it ! Look at Foul-mouthed Annie in her rags and filth. Look at her face, ugly with drink and

shame. Look at her grimy itching fingers which lift the watches from rich men's pockets. Look at her, bent from sleeping in the gutters and doorways of the city. You who say you love her. Prove it. Prove it!

[MRS. FRY *hesitates a moment, then advances to* ANNIE *and puts her arm round her.*]

MRS. FRY. Let those who are without sin themselves, cast the first stone at you.

[*She kisses* ANNIE.]

MRS. FRY. Annie, it is you who don't know the world. You only know a little bit of it. There's so much that you have still to learn.

[ANNIE *looks up at* MRS. FRY *in wonder.*]

ANNIE. You! You could do *that!* Then it *is* true, it *is* true!

MRS. FRY. Of course it is, child. Belinda, give me that counterpane.

[BELINDA *hands one of the counterpanes to* MRS. FRY.]

You're going to Australia to-morrow, Annie. I shall not be with you for long, but Serena will be your teacher. Take this one, Serena. [*She hands* SERENA *the second counterpane.*] They will remind you of your last day in Newgate.

SERENA. Thank you, ma'am.

MRS. FRY. I shall visit you on the transport, and I shall be there when you sail out. Learn to love each other, and pray that God will give you both strength to face the future.

ANNIE. We will, ma'am.

MRS. FRY. Now sit down, and let me read to you. [*They sit down.*] What shall it be, Mary?

MARY. The one we had last week, ma'am, about the Shepherd.

MRS. FRY. Good. [*She opens the Bible and reads the twenty-third Psalm. The women listen attentively. The* CURTAIN *is drawn gradually during the last two verses of the Psalm.*]

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

CURTAIN

CAMEO PLAYS

SENIOR BOOKS

BOOK 1

THE WARMING PAN	W. W Jacobs	*THE BOY COMES HOME*	A. A. Milne
THE WANDERING SCHOLAR	Hans Sachs	*A CRUMB FOR THE BIRD*	M Armstrong
SILLY WILLY	Clifford Bax	*FISHING*	G. H Holroyd
HUNTED HARES	G. H. Holroyd	*TICKET POCKET TABLOID*	Wm Cox

BOOK 2

THE TENTS OF THE ARABS	Lord Dunsany	*MEET MRS BEETON*	L du Garde Peach
THE PIE AND THE TART	Hugh Chesterman	*AU PETIT TRIANON*	Harcourt Williams
CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE	G. A. Stephens	*THE MUDDLETON EXPRESS*	G H Holroyd
HAPPY AS A KING	Hans Sachs	*MY LADY'S BROOCH*	D G Green

BOOK 7

ROBIN HOOD AND THE PEDLAR	J Drinkwater	*THE ANNIVERSARY*	Laurence Housman
CROOKS' CHRISTMAS	L du Garde Peach	*OUTWITTED*	G H Holroyd
NOTHING BUT HIS DUE	Norah Kelly	*THE QUAKER'S 'CELLO*	Clifford Bax
CAESAR VISITS BRITAIN	G. H. Holroyd	*ELIZABETH REFUSES*	M Macnamara

BOOK 8 (Boys)

THE DEATH TRAP	"Saki"	*ALL CAMOUFLAGE*	M Pakington
FIVE POOR TRAVELLERS	Hans Sachs	*HADRIAN'S WALL*	G H Holroyd
THE CHINESE SHILLING	A. Dunning	*THE 'OLE IN THE ROAD*	"Seamark"
THREAD O' SCARLET	J J. Bell	*THE KING AND THE BISHOP*	D G Green

BOOK 9 (Girls)

THE PANIC	Nora Ratcliff	*CELESTIAL MEETING*	Clive Sansom
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